

"We are realists... we dream the impossible" - Che



Fire This Time!

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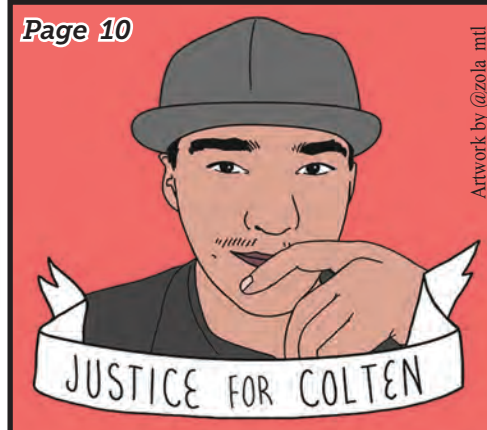


**VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR
TO CANADA
HIS EXCELLENCY
MR. WILMER OMAR
BARRIENTOS FERNÁNDEZ**

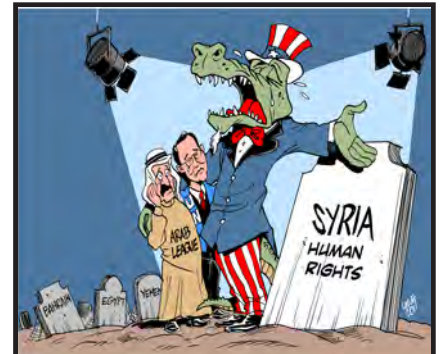


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Artwork by @zola_mtl



CROCODILE TEARS OVER THE TRAGEDY OF SYRIA

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CROCODILE TEARS OVER THE TRAGEDY OF SYRIA

By Nita Palmer

#aleppoisburning - the hashtag has been trending on Twitter for some time now, accompanied

by photographs of ruined buildings and the chaos of injured bodies. The beautiful Syrian city is indeed burning, left with empty streets and bombed-out shells which occupy the space where examples of the city's fine architecture once stood. But one question goes unanswered: if Aleppo is burning, who set the city alight?

Western governments, rights groups, and mainstream media point to the crimes of the 'Assad regime' in Aleppo. They express rage at the killing of civilians, and publish images of war-scarred children to tug at our heartstrings, begging us to condemn the tyranny.

In their hue and cry over the crimes of the 'regime', they ignore the brutal reality of children murdered by US-backed terrorists, of neighbourhoods shattered by their hell-cannons and weapons supplied by Western allies. It is, in fact, the US and their allies who set the city and the country alight, but this is never mentioned. Stories from Aleppo are reported without regard to fairness, context, or even basic journalistic accuracy and fact-checking.

Are we to ignore the deaths of 30 of Aleppo's citizens on July 20 - at the hands of the US-backed al-Nusra Front? (now rebranded as Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, or the Front for the Conquest of the Levant) Do their lives mean less simply because they are on the side of the city under Syrian government control? Likewise, should we ignore the brutal beheading of a 12-year-old boy by these so-called 'moderate rebels' earlier this summer? And beyond Aleppo, what of the US airstrike which killed at least 73 civilians in northern Syria in July? The media maintains an unconscionable silence on these horrific crimes.

Syria is also facing a humanitarian crisis on many levels. According to UNICEF,

access to water in areas with the most fighting has been reduced by 75%. This has caused an increase in easily preventable diseases. Young children are often the worst affected by the lack of available sanitation facilities and drinkable water. The Syrian health care system has been decimated as well, with the World Health Organization reporting that 57% of Syria's hospitals have been damaged and 37% are no longer functioning. A staggering number of people have died as a result of lack of access to health care - the Syrian American Medical Association estimates around 300,000. It is truly a tragedy to see these senseless deaths in a country which once boasted one of the best health care systems in the region.

WHAT IS REALLY HAPPENING IN SYRIA?

The media has left all context out of their story on situation in Aleppo, reporting as though it is a one-sided attack by the Syrian government on its own citizen. What is in fact happening in the city is a pitched battle for the very future of Syria.

The war in Syria began in 2011, when so-called 'rebels' backed by the US, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia began an armed uprising against the Syrian government. The Pentagon launched a \$500 million program to support and train these 'rebels'. Though that program has been cancelled, the New York Times reported in October 2015 that the CIA continues to support 'significantly larger' programs of the same kind. With foreign support, these armed insurgents quickly gained ground. Despite the known ties to al-Qaeda among some of the rebels, the US labelled them as the 'moderate opposition'. Not surprisingly, backing these Islamist groups and destabilizing the country created an opening for the



terrorists of Daesh, or ISIS, to gain significant control in Syria. Today, dozens of factions battle for ground in Syria, each with their own interests.

Now we come to Aleppo, Syria's major commercial centre and an important weapons supply route for the terrorist organizations which call themselves 'rebels'. Since the beginning of the war, the city has been divided primarily between Syrian government control and terrorist control. In the beginning of 2016, the Syrian army began to make gains against the terrorist groups that control half of Aleppo. By the end of July, the army had Aleppo surrounded and had cut off the last weapons supply route of the terrorists. It was around this time that Western governments and their supporters in the media began the #aleppoisburning campaign in order to pressure the Syrian government and their allies to stop their military campaign (which would of course allow the rebels to regain control of their supply routes). In fact, the British newspaper Daily Mail reported on August 6 that at least 130 civilians had been killed in less than a week - mostly by rebel shelling of government-controlled Aleppo.

U.S. GOAL REMOVE ASSAD, NOT DAESH

The war in Syria never was a 'civil' war - from the beginning it was created by US intervention. The US government has long had its sights set on removing President Assad from power. The Washington Post reported in 2011 that the

US government had been funding illegal organizations in Syria since 2006, whose aim was to promote unrest and opposition to the government. US President Obama has repeatedly called for Assad's ouster.

From the Wall Street Journal, November 2015:

"The reason is not simply because of my opinion of [President Assad]. It is because it is unimaginable that you can stop the civil war here when the overwhelming majority of people in Syria consider him to be a brutal, murderous dictator," Mr. Obama said. "He cannot regain legitimacy. And if in fact he is still in power, regardless of what outside powers do, there is still going to be large portions of the population that are fighting."

Obama's claims about Syrian lack of support for Assad are categorically false. London-based research firm ORB International conducted a poll in 2015 which found that 47% of Syrians described Assad as 'having a positive influence in Syria' compared to 26% for the opposition groups. Syrian support for Assad was also verified by his re-election in 2014 in a vote which was internationally monitored.

The US has set its sights on the removal of Assad not for 'humanitarian reasons' but because it views the independent government of Syria as a threat to its interests in the region, which include gaining access to important trade markets and resources ahead of growing economic competitors such as China and Russia. It is also in the US interest to maintain a military presence next door to Iran, The US would prefer a Syrian government which bows to US political, military and economic interests.

The US needed this manufactured 'civil war' in order to legitimize their intervention in the country, a move

which otherwise would have been met with a great deal more resistance from war-weary US citizens and rank-and-file military members. They armed 'rebels' knowing full well that many of them had ties to extremist Islamist organizations, including al-Qaeda.

The inevitable rise of Daesh provided the justification the US needed to expand its intervention in the country under the guise of 'fighting terrorism'.

TURKEY AND US EXPAND INTERVENTION



Before and After War. Aleppo, Syria



Before and After War. Aleppo, Syria

Despite repeated assurances by Obama that the US military would not be directly intervening in Syria, there are now 300 US troops in the country and a number of warplanes in the skies, regularly conducting airstrikes. However, the US has been looking for an opening to intervene further and they have found it in their close ally, Turkey. On August 24, the Turkish military launched Operation Euphrates Shield, a ground invasion by Turkish troops, which was closely coordinated with the US and supported by US air strikes. Although the official Turkish pretext for this operation is the protection of the Turkish border from Daesh, in reality it is a significant move towards opening the country for further intervention. For the first time, a NATO member state will have 'boots on the ground' in the country.

Turkey has its own interests in Syria

as well - namely pushing back the expansion of Kurdish territory, which Turkey fears will strengthen the fight for Kurdish independence within its own borders. This adds yet another level of factionalism to the war in Syria, as the Turkish army is now fighting the Kurds, with whom the US had been working with until last week. This is just one further confrontation which threatens to tear apart the fabric of Syrian society.

DEMAND AN END TO IMPERIALIST INTERVENTION IN SYRIA!

This significant escalation of intervention in their country will not 'help' the people of Syria one bit in their battle against Daesh. The US and their allies helped to create Daesh and other Islamist groups in the first place - they will not stop them now. As for Syria's internal problems and struggles, including the question of who they would like to have as leader of their country, these are issues for Syrians to decide for themselves.

Poor and working people, peace loving people, and social justice activists around the world must rally together in defence of Syria's right to self-determination and for an end to this brutal and senseless war. Only the capitalist class of imperialist countries stands to benefit from this war, which will only kill, maim, and displace millions more people as it drags on.

The importance of defending Syria extends well beyond the borders of that nation, though: it is truly a question of defending the entire world from the threat both war. Millions of lives have already been lost in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, Palestine and beyond. The rising exodus of people from their war-torn homelands is destabilizing neighbouring countries, whose limited

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FIRE THIS TIME'S EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW HIS EXCELLENCY WILMER BARRIENTOS FERNÁNDEZ VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR TO CANADA

Interview & Translation
By Alison Bodine

Below is the Part 1 of an extensive interview by Fire This Time (FTT) with the Venezuelan Ambassador to Canada, His Excellency Wilmer Omar Barrientos Fernández. The next part of this interview will be printed in the next issue of Fire This Time (Volume 10, Issue 10 - October):

Fire This Time: A recent article in the news magazine USA Today claimed that Venezuela is “worst economic and humanitarian crisis in its history.” This article is only one of many from mainstream media that spread certain views of the United States government. For example they show time and time again how thousands of Venezuelan people are going to Colombia daily to buy basic goods. What is your response to this?

Amb. Barrientos: In reality, in Venezuela there is an economic crisis caused mainly by the fall in oil prices and also by the by the improper use of fracking which has flooded the oil product market; but there is also a plot by the hegemonic powers associated with the Venezuelan oligarchy that has strongly influenced the shortages of products and medicines through a despicable method that the government has called economic war. Add to this the

attack on the currency, and that is, I believe, a terrible imbalance in the economic apparatus. I think that the directors of this attack have prematurely announced this humanitarian crisis, for which they themselves are working towards, in order to create a great discontent among the people.

President Maduro has publicly accepted, as has our Foreign Minister, that we have an economic crisis which is the same as that facing other oil producing countries. The foreign currency revenue from oil sales in January 2016 was \$77 million, while in the same month six years ago it stood at \$3.317 trillion, representing a fall of greater than 4200%. However, we are taking this on as a great opportunity to diversify the economy, and to wean off of the oil rentier model.

What has been happening in Venezuela has not been a coincidence. It is clear that other expeditious ways of unconstitutional actions are exhausted at both an international and a national level, and yet they have not resulted in the desired objectives; economic warfare and financial aggression in the absence of political outcomes as been severely affecting the business and financial sectors of the country; attempts to reactivate the “guarimbas” [violent, opposition led riots] are not reaching the necessary maturity in a society that does not want more violence, and rejects any action that threatens national peace.

We cannot forget the agents that have caused this crisis; for this crisis has not come from one day to another. I will explain some of the mechanisms that have been used for this purpose.

1. War against the currency
The original



Wilmer Barrientos Fernández speaks at the Venezuela Solidarity Conference in Ottawa August 7, 2016

cause and the trigger of the economic destabilization is the manipulation of the exchange rate of the Venezuelan currency on the parallel market. This has two effects that generate a vicious cycle in the economy:

- It increases the National Index of Consumer Prices (INPC), deteriorating the real wages of the working class in the country through the loss of purchasing power, it reconfigures the structure of household expenditures and decreases the demand for non-essential goods, resulting in reduced production and increases in unemployment.
- It distorts the exchange market, increasing the gap between the preferential rate and the parallel rate, which generates benefits for the private sector based on currency speculation alone, and they no longer import the necessary goods, thereby increasing shortages.

A small but important business sector also manipulates the flow of dollars in the parallel market and alongside “Dollar Today” this business sector spearheads the promotion of speculation and usury.

2. Planned Shortages, Smuggling Hoarding

- There has been a relative decline in imports in kilograms with respect to an increase in imports for dollars.
- There is a hoarding of essential, mainly non-perishable, goods; goods for which the production and distribution is handled by monopolies or oligopolies that coordinate transactions.
- There is extractive smuggling.
- Consumer expectations have changed



Alison Bodine, Wilmer Barrientos Fernández and Tamara Hansen at the Venezuela Solidarity Conference in Ottawa August 7, 2016

since the rise to the presidency of the Commander Hugo Chavez, now there is an expanded demand for goods and people have greater purchasing power than before.

FTT: What has Venezuela done in order to defend the Venezuelan people in this situation and to ensure that there is no humanitarian crisis?

Ambassador Barrientos: Constitutional validity has been granted by the Supreme Court to the emergency economic decree as well as to the implementation of the plan towards “16 production engines” We invite everyone to learn more about the potential and scope of the “production engines” by visiting our website (www.misionvenezuela.org).

The President has taken extraordinary measures to end the economic crisis in several dimensions, such as measures taken to fight against the attack on the currency through mechanisms such as “Dollar Today.” Measures have also been taken against the attack on the system of distribution of goods and services.

We have also demonstrated that there is system of international boycott that has only one goal, and that is to bring Venezuela to its knees. This is a form of war without face, a war of putting pressure the people. It is a battle that emerges from the economy, from global geopolitics, it is the oil war.

Despite all of the budgetary constraints caused by the economic crisis, we have established specific policies to protect the people. That is why we do not accept blackmailing by those who are trying to label this situation as a violation of human rights or a humanitarian crisis. To the contrary, we have enacted concrete measures to protect the people. I will explain below six of the concrete actions we that have been taken to achieve this objective:

1. A new system of food production, distribution and commercialization which:

- Has created a single corporation for food services and production in order

to unify the logistics which were before divided into three corporations: CVAL, Mercal and Abastos Bicentenario. This single corporation will now run the direct distribution centres for the community markets.

- Stresses the importance of the original force of communal supplies, people power is responsible for the distribution of food through a new system of producers.

2. A new system for the guarantee of real costs and prices

- New prices based on actual costs and a maximum retail price. The Law of Fair Prices is applied to essential goods and services for the people. To this end, the President set up a general staff that will handle pricing and restructuring of the Food Mission.

3. A new gasoline price scheme

- The new price per liter of gasoline is one Bolivar (1BS) per liter (91 octane) and six bolivars (6BS) per liter (95 octane). These new prices came into effect last February 19 in the 600,000 gas stations operating in Venezuela. The resources generated by this increase in prices were allocated to system of Missions as established by the Organic Law of Missions, the Great Missions and Micro Missions. 30 percent of all of these new resources were allocated to the Transport Mission for the allocation of credit and renewal of the fleet.

- It is noteworthy that Venezuela has the cheapest gasoline in the world. In the US a liter of gasoline costs 78 cents, in Colombia and Venezuela it is 1.1 cent, just 0.01 cent on the dollar.

- That does not mean that Venezuela is increasing the prices of this item for the people, on the contrary, this subsidy has been maintained, every liter of fuel costs PDVSA 1.87 Bolivars, at the same time, the Venezuelan consumer pays just 0.09 Bolivars.

4. A new system for the creation, acquisition, investment and management of foreign exchange

- The new currency system is composed of five vital components: the National Plan of Currency created in 2014, the defense

of oil revenue, new exports and new foreign exchange earnings, attracting investment and the injection of dollars into the Venezuelan economic system and the introduction of a dual-band exchange system.

- As of February 18, the protected exchange rate went from 6.30 to 10 Bolivars per dollar in priority areas for the nation.

- The exchange rate system is simplified into two bands: a protected exchange rate, which starting on February 18, replaced the Sicad and a floating complementary system, which replaced Simadi. The protected exchange rate is set at 10 Bolivars per dollar and will apply in four strategic areas: health, missions and large missions, food and production incentives.

5. Plan for strengthening employment protection, wages and pensions

- A plan for investment in public works to build new infrastructure and generate quality workplaces, this plan received 120 billion Bolivars in 2015. In 2016, the government approved 190 billion Bolivars.

- An increase in the minimum wage (for both workers and pensioners). A wage increase of 20 percent, and a further 2.5 percent increase based on bonus calculations, has recently come into effect. This is the 33rd yearly consecutive wage increase in 17 years of the Bolivarian Revolution.

- The introduction of a social missions card. This is a mechanism to secure the social programs and funding to families for food and health through Mercal, FarmaPatria and Pdval, as part of a new complementary system of protection, support and promotion of the capacities of Venezuelan families.

6. Tax revolution plan

- Installing a new electronic and digital billing to allow transparent tax collection and avoid tax evasion that has been successful in Ecuador.

- Internal taxation has contributed 90 percent of the revenue needed to sustain the country and uphold the State missions and great social missions.

- In 2015, tax revenue accounted for 90 percent of revenue to the nation. This allowed the state to maintain investment in education, public works, housing, wages, jobs and pensions, even amid falling oil revenues.

FTT: Can you also talk about the thousands of Venezuelans that go to Colombia for the

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FOLLOW

THE VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR TO CANADA

HIS EXCELLENCY

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*** EN ESPAÑOL ***

Por Alison Bodine

A continuación se muestra la parte 1 de una extensa entrevista por Fire This Time (FTT) con el embajador de Venezuela en Canadá, Su Excelencia Wilmer Omar Barrientos Fernández. La siguiente parte de esta entrevista será impreso en la próxima edición de Fire This Time (Volumen 10, Número 10 - octubre):

Fire This Time: Un artículo reciente en la revista "USA Today" afirmó que Venezuela es "en el peor crisis económica y humanitaria en su historia." Este artículo es sólo uno de muchos de los principales medios que se propagan a ciertos puntos de vista del gobierno de Estados Unidos. Por ejemplo, se muestran una y otra vez cómo miles de venezolanos van a Colombia a diario para comprar artículos de primera necesidad. ¿Cuál es su respuesta a esto?

Sr. Barrientos: Realmente en Venezuela hay una crisis económica causada fundamentalmente por la caída del precio del petróleo y por la inundación del mercado petróleo producto del uso inadecuado del fracking; pero además existe un complot de poderes hegemónicos que asociados a la oligarquía venezolana han incidido contundentemente en el desabastecimiento de productos y medicamentos a través de un método que es despreciable y que el gobierno ha denominado guerra económica. Aunado a esto el ataque contra la moneda que creo un terrible desbalance en el aparato económico. Pienso que los directores de esta estocada han anunciado por adelantado la crisis humanitaria, para lo cual ellos están trabajando, para crear un gran descontento en el pueblo.

El presidente Maduro ha aceptado públicamente, al igual que nuestra canciller que tenemos una crisis económica, que es la

LA ENTREVISTA EXCLUSIVA DE FIRE THIS TIME

EL EMBAJADOR DE LA REPÚBLICA BOLIVARIANA DE VENEZUELA SU EXCELENCIA WILMER BARRIENTOS FERNÁNDEZ

misma que afrontan los países productores de petróleo; el ingreso de divisas por concepto de venta petrolera en enero de 2016 fue de 77 millones de dólares, mientras que en el mismo mes hace seis años se ubicaba en 3 mil 317 millones, lo que representa una caída superior a 4 mil 200 por ciento. Sin embargo, lo estamos asumiendo como una gran oportunidad para diversificar la economía, para lo cual estamos trabajando, para dejar de depender del modelo rentista petrolero.

Lo que pasa en Venezuela tampoco ha sido casualidad; es evidente que el agotamiento de otras vías expeditas de acciones inconstitucionales, a nivel internacional y nacional, no venían cumpliendo con los objetivos planteados: la guerra económica y las agresiones financieras a falta de resultados políticos, ha venido afectando severamente a los sectores empresariales y financieros del país; los intentos de reactivación de guarimbas no alcanzan el proceso de maduración necesario en una sociedad que no quiere más violencia, y rechaza cualquier acción que atente contra la paz nacional.

No podemos olvidar los agentes causantes de esta crisis. A esta crisis no se llegó de un día para otro; y te explicaré algunos de los mecanismos utilizados para tal fin.

1. Guerra contra la moneda

La causa original y desencadenante de la desestabilización económica es la manipulación de la tasa de cambio de la moneda venezolana en el mercado paralelo. Ésta tiene dos efectos que generan un círculo vicioso en la economía del país:

- Implica un aumento del Índice Nacional de Precios al Consumidor (INPC), deteriora el salario real de la clase trabajadora del país mediante la pérdida del poder adquisitivo, reconfigura la estructura de gastos de los hogares y disminuye la demanda de los bienes no necesarios, presiona la reducción de la producción y aumenta el desempleo.

- Distorsiona el mercado cambiario, aumentando la brecha entre el tipo de cambio preferencial y este tipo de cambio paralelo,

genera beneficios al sector privado sólo mediante la especulación con la moneda sin necesidad de importar los bienes necesarios, lo que hace aumentar el desabastecimiento.

Un pequeño pero importante sector empresarial manipula el flujo del dólar paralelo y lo posiciona con Dólar Today como punta de lanza para la promoción de la especulación y la usura.

2. Desabastecimiento Planificado, Contrabando y Acaparamiento

- Disminución relativa de las importaciones en kilogramos con respecto al aumento de las importaciones por dólares.

- Acaparamiento de bienes de primera necesidad, principalmente no perecederos y cuya producción y distribución está a cargo de monopolios u oligopolios que coordinan transacciones.

- Contrabando de extracción.

- Debido al cambio de expectativas del consumidor desde el ascenso a la presidencia por parte del Comandante Hugo Chávez, se expandió la demanda de bienes y el pueblo tiene ahora mayor poder de consumo.

FTT: ¿Ahora por que no es una crisis humanitaria y que hemos hecho para defender al pueblo venezolano de esta situación?

Sr. Barrientos: Con la vigencia constitucional que otorgó el Tribunal Supremo de Justicia al decreto de emergencia económica y con la instrumentación de 16 motores productivos, que por cierto invito a todos a conocer en detalle las potencialidades y alcances de los motores productivos, visitando nuestra página web (misionvenezuela.org); el Presidente tomó medidas extraordinarias para acabar con la crisis económica que desde varias dimensiones, como el ataque a la moneda a través de mecanismos como "Dólar Today", así como el ataque al sistema de distribución de bienes y servicios, se venían dando.

Como hasta ahora hemos mostrado es un sistema de boicot internacional que tiene un

solo objetivo, y es arrodillar a Venezuela, una modalidad de guerra sin cara, de presión al pueblo, es una batalla desde lo económico, desde la geopolítica mundial, es la guerra del petróleo.

Con todas las limitaciones presupuestarias dada la crisis económica, aun así, hemos establecido políticas concretas para proteger al pueblo, y es por ello que no aceptamos los chantajes que quieren darle a esta situación un aspecto violación de derechos humanos o de crisis humanitaria, cuando al contrario hemos accionado con medidas concretas para proteger al pueblo. Explicaré a continuación seis acciones concretas para el logro de tal objetivo:

1. Nuevo sistema alimentario de producción, distribución y comercialización

- Creación de la corporación única de servicios alimentarios y productivos para unificar la logística antes dividida en tres corporaciones: Cval, Mercal y Abastos Bicentenario que ahora serán centros de distribución directa de mercados comunales.

- Destaca la importancia de la fuerza original de los abastos comunales, es el poder popular encargado de la distribución de los alimentos a través de un nuevo sistema de bodegueros.

2. Nuevo sistema de fijación de costos reales y precios

- Nuevos precios con base en costos reales y con precio máximo de venta al público. La aplicación de la Ley de Precios Justos se hace sobre los productos y servicios indispensables para el pueblo. Para ello, el Presidente instaló un Estado Mayor que se encargará de la fijación de precios y la reestructuración de la Misión Alimentación.

3. Nuevo esquema de precios de gasolina

- El nuevo precio por litro de gasolina es de un bolívar (1bs) el litro de 91 octanos y de seis bolívares (6bs) la de 95 octanos que entró en vigencia el pasado 19 de febrero en las mil 600 gasolineras que funcionan en territorio venezolano. Los recursos generados por este sistema se destinaron al Sistema de Misiones como lo establece la Ley Orgánica de Misiones, Grandes Misiones y Micro Misiones. El 30 por ciento de todos los recursos fueron destinados a la Misión



Una foto de grupo en de la Conferencia en solidaridad con Venezuela en Ottawa, Canadá 7 de agosto 2016

Transporte para asignación de créditos y renovación de la flota.

- Cabe destacar, que Venezuela tiene la gasolina más barata del mundo. En Estados Unidos un litro de gasolina cuesta 0,78 dólares, en Colombia 1.1 y en Venezuela, apenas 0,01 centavo de dólar.

- Eso no significa que aumentamos los precios de este rubro al pueblo, al contrario, hemos mantenido el su subsidio, pues cada litro de combustible cuesta 1,87 bolívares a PDVSA, al mismo tiempo en el que el consumidor venezolano paga 0,09 bolívares.

4. Nuevo sistema de creación, captación, inversión y administración de divisas del país

- El nuevo sistema de divisas está compuesto de cinco componentes vitales: el Plan Nacional de Divisas creado en 2014, la defensa de los ingresos por renta petrolera, las nuevas exportaciones y nuevos ingresos en divisas, la atracción de inversiones e inyección de dólares al sistema económico venezolano y el sistema de cambio en dos bandas.

- A partir del 18 de febrero, la banda del sistema protegido pasa de 6.30 a 10 bolívares por dólar en áreas prioritarias para la nación.

- El sistema cambiario queda simplificado en dos bandas: un cambio protegido, que sustituye al Sicad, comenzó a partir del 18 de febrero, y se ubicó en 10 bolívares por dólar y aplicará para cuatro áreas estratégicas: salud, misiones y grandes misiones, alimentación y acupuntura para producir; y un sistema complementario flotante, que sustituye a Simadi.

5. Plan reforzado de protección de empleo, salarios y pensiones

- Plan de inversión en obras públicas que construya nueva infraestructura y genere plazas de trabajo de calidad, en 2015 se invirtieron 120 mil millones de bolívares y para el 2016, el Ejecutivo aprobó 190 mil millones de bolívares.

- Aumento salario mínimo (para trabajadores y pensionados).

Recientemente un aumento de 20 por ciento sobre el salario y 2,5 por ciento sobre la base de cálculo del bono de alimentación se hizo efectivo. Es el incremento salarial número 33 que da la Revolución Bolivariana en 17 años (de forma ininterrumpida, no ha habido año en que no se aplique).

- Tarjeta de misiones socialistas: mecanismo de amarre de los programas sociales y financiamientos a las familias para la alimentación y salud en Mercal, FarmaPatria y Pdval, esto como parte de un nuevo sistema complementario de protección, apoyo y promoción de las capacidades de la familia venezolana.

6. Plan de Revolución tributaria

- Instalación de un nuevo sistema de facturación electrónica y digital que permitirá el cobro transparente de los impuestos evitando la evasión fiscal que en Ecuador ha dado buenos resultados.

- Tributos internos han aportado 90 por ciento de los ingresos para sostener al país y mantener el Estado de misiones y grandes misiones sociales.

- La recaudación tributaria aportó el 90 por ciento de los ingresos a la nación en 2015 que permitieron al Estado mantener la inversión

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El Embajador de Venezuela
Su Excelencia
WILMER
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The infamous Bill C-51 has had many names. Its full name when first introduced by the Conservative government in 2015 was, “An Act to enact the Security of Canada Information Sharing Act and the Secure Air Travel Act, to amend the Criminal Code, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts.” A real tongue twister of human rights abuses. They then tried to shorten it to the more sound-bite worthy, “Anti-Terrorism Act 2015”. As the protests against it grew across Canada, it soon became known by the more accurate “Police State Act” or “Secret Police Act”.

Since the Liberals won the Federal Election over 9 months ago, it's been “The Bill Which Shall Not be Named” as they've done everything they can to avoid committing to anything concrete to address the huge concerns raised by practically every single legal, human rights, civil rights and media organization in Canada.

Whatever you call it, under the fake pretext of “fighting terrorism”, Bill C-51 is a massive attack on our fundamental human and democratic rights. More specifically though, it targets poor and working people in an attempt to scare, divide and dismantle the inevitable fightback against the Canadian government's continuing policies of war, occupation and cutbacks.

Criminalizing Dissent

Among Bill C-51's many provisions is the one which expands the definition of terrorism to, “interference with the capability of the Government in relation to... the economic or financial stability of Canada.”

A fundamental right and powerful tool of worker's is to go on strike. Refusing to go to work until the employer has agreed to certain conditions has won better wages, the 40 hour work week, health and safety requirements, maternity leave, overtime pay and every other basic right employees have. Not because employers decided out of the goodness of their hearts to provide these things, but

Bill C-51: An Attack on Poor and Working People in Canada

because workers were forced to withhold their labour to force employers to act more fairly. Under Bill C-51, a strike by bus drivers for better safety conditions could easily fit Bill C-51's definition of “terrorism”, as could countless other strikes to defend our rights at work.

The right to peaceful protest is also directly targeted. Community members participating in a union picket line around a business which unfairly fires workers fits the description. As does a march and rally demanding justice for missing and murdered indigenous women which temporarily blocks traffic downtown. Likely targets are also indigenous groups who assert that the government commit to its promise to follow through with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. This requires “free, prior and informed consent” before anything happens on their territories. With a fragile economy and lots of immediate cash to be made through resource extraction projects on indigenous lands, Bill C-51 could easily be used to squash legitimate land defence.

Meanwhile, interception of Canadians private communications increased by 26 times last year according to the annual report of the Office of the Commissioner of the Communications Security Establishment.

The Liberals have promised to protect “lawful” protest, but that's not fair when practically every major strike in Canada in the last two decades has been declared “illegal” by Federal or Provincial governments. According to the Canadian Foundation for Labour Rights, “In the last three decades, the federal government alone passed 19 pieces of back-to-work legislation while provincial governments across the country have enacted 71 pieces of back-to-work legislation.”

Climate of Fear

Under Bill C-51 there are also new broad, vague and dangerous powers provided for targeting those “advocating or promoting terrorism”. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association said this would “chill free speech” as, “...the offence is overbroad because the range of conduct that may be captured under ‘terrorism offences’ is extensive and there are no reasonable defences when charged.”

Both the Conservatives and the Liberals have been unwilling or unable to explain what this new offence really means, while legal experts continue to say it could mean anything. Meanwhile, poor and working people in Canada are faced with the knowledge that participation in any number of political activities could find



them unjustly targeted by the government and stuck in some unregulated legal nightmare.

We have been told repeatedly just to trust the government, the police and the secret police not to abuse these undefined new powers, but Bill C-51 allows for so much secrecy we aren't even able to hold them accountable for their use.

During Fire This Time's participation in many social justice petition campaigns, we are consistently met with people who say they "support what the petition says" but cannot sign it for fear of, "ending up on some government list". The fear is already real. We need to question what kind of political atmosphere we live under in Canada when people are already afraid to sign petitions or participate publicly in legal political activities, or even speak their minds, for fear of government targeting. Bill C-51 only adds fuel to this fire.

Imperialist governments around the world know that they are not going to be able to convince poor and working people that more wars and more cutbacks are a good idea. They also know that if they can create an environment where people are afraid to speak up and organize, they will be to continue their anti-policies.

Historical and International Context

"We must also be conscious of the fact that the wartime attacks usually open with racism, but always move quickly to target political opponents - especially those representing working class interests such as trade unions and trade union organizers. This is no accident, as the working class and their allies represent the most serious threat to imperialist governments and their war agendas. When workers refuse to fight in wars, refuse to produce war products, refuse to ship war products, refuse to participate in anything related to war - the imperialist war machine comes to a standstill. The Canadian government has known this during every one of its war

campaigns, and has therefore always made a deliberate attempt to attack working class organizations."

- Fire This Time, Volume 9 Issue 9. "Bill C-51: Why you Should Be Concerned About It and Why You Should Fight Against It"

During World War I, government fear campaigns and targeting of Ukrainians, Austrians and Germans moved almost immediately to attacks on trade unions and arrests of antiwar organizers. During World War II, racist attacks on Japanese, Italians and Germans again moved quickly to attacks on working class organizations and silencing antiwar voices. Bill C-51 was justified by former Prime Minister Stephen Harper under the supposed threat of Muslim "jihadi

Last August, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs issued a press release which warned that, "The Indigenous Unist'ot'en Clan of the Wet'suwet'en Nation in northwestern BC are on high alert about a likely impending large scale RCMP mass arrest operation on their territory. The RCMP have made a number of visits to the Unist'ot'en as well as other First Nations leadership regarding the Unist'ot'en community's active exercise of their Aboriginal Title and Rights to protect their lands from oil and gas development."

As pipeline clearing work moved closer to the camp, both the press release and many news articles speculated that Bill C-51 could be used to legalize the dismantling of the camp which the Unist'ot'en have maintained since 2009, and which is blocking seven pipelines that do not have Unist'ot'en consent to use their land.

The Unist'ot'en camp stood strong, and hundreds of organizations and individuals signed on to a well distributed public statement demanding the RCMP respect their rights. Under the glare of the public eye, the RCMP were forced to issue their own press release stating that the police force, "has no intention of 'taking down the camp' set up."

A year later and the camp is still standing, and is an important example of what we must continue to do under Bill C-51. We must continue to educate, to organize and to mobilize not only against Bill C-51, but to continue all of the vital social justice campaigns which are so necessary across the country. We must gain strength from knowing that the government wouldn't be trying to take away our rights if they weren't worried about what would happen if we fully exercised them. We must continue to stand our ground, to hold public space and refuse to be silent in the face of those who want to silence us. Ultimately this is how poor and working people will defeat Bill C-51, and continue building the better world we all know is so possible and so necessary.

*Follow Thomas Davies on Twitter:
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terrorists", and again puts the government in a position to crack down against opposition to its expensive wars, occupations and sanctions against such countries as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Mali and Iran. It also puts the government in a much better position to any workers or trade unions whose defense of their rights does not fit with the government's cutback agenda.

It is also important to be aware how exactly the same strategies and policies are being used by the other imperialist countries involved in these wars and occupations. Take a look at the wars, and islamophobic rhetoric and human rights violating "anti-terrorism" laws passed by the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany and Australia. It's pretty obvious that they are all reading from the same play book!

Human Rights, Civil Rights, Democratic Rights, All Under Attack, What Do We Do? Stand up, Fight Back!

JUSTICE FOR COLTEN!



THE MURDER OF COLTEN BOUSHIE: IS RACISM A CANADIAN PROBLEM?

By Tamara Hansen

"They think they know about Indians," she says, of non-Indigenous Canada. "They have this belief, that's taught to them from birth, that everything Native people face is our own choice." - Chelsea Vowel, Métis educator and writer

"You can see that the racial tension is basically a tinder box in Saskatchewan," - Robert Innes, professor of Indigenous studies at the University of Saskatchewan

"[Saskatchewan] Premier Brad Wall naively pointed out that racism has no place in Saskatchewan when in fact, it's a part of this province's fabric for generations." - Doug Cuthand, author, journalist and member of the Little Pine First Nation

The Story of Colten Boushie

On August 9, 2016 five youth riding in a vehicle in rural Saskatchewan pulled into a farm looking for help after they got a flat tire. Instead, their vehicle was attacked by a farmer with a loaded gun. One of the youths was shot and killed on the spot, this young 22-year-old First Nations man's name was Colten Boushie.

In a CBC website article, journalist Devin Heroux outlines the position of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) from their press release dated August 10, 2016. Heroux writes, "According to RCMP, five people were in a vehicle that entered a farmyard in the Rural Municipality of Glenside. The owners of the property did not know the people in the vehicle. A verbal exchange happened and a shot was fired, striking Boushie. He was pronounced dead at the scene."

However the RCMP release also alludes to

these youth being criminals. It states, "One adult male [Gerald Stanley] associated to the property was arrested by police at the scene without incident. Three occupants from the vehicle, including two females (one being a youth) and one adult male were taken into custody as part of a related theft investigation. Another male youth is being sought." In the end no charges were laid against any of the youth.

Colten Boushie's friend, Eric Meechance, who was in the car with him that fateful day, has been speaking out and making sure reporters hear his version of events. Meechance explains that the five youth had been swimming and on their way back to the Red Pheasant First Nation got a flat tire. In the vehicle was Colten, Eric, their girlfriends and another male friend.

Journalist Bryn Levy reported Eric Meechance's story to CKOM News Talk 360:

"All of a sudden some guy, he just came out and he just smashed our windshield," he said.

From there, Meechance said his friend tried to drive away.

"He couldn't really see because the windshield was cracked, it was all spidered across," he said.

Meechance said they hit a vehicle parked in the yard and that's when he and the driver got out and took off running. Meechance said as far as he knew, Boushie and the two girlfriends were still in the car at that point.

He said he was still running when the man allegedly opened fire.

"We were maybe like 10, 15 feet from the

vehicle and I just heard a shot go off -- boom," he said.

Meechance said he heard more shots as he scrambled for cover, passing a woman who he said had been mowing the lawn at the home.

"I just ran past her and I just ran right to the bush and then all of a sudden there was a STARS air ambulance flying over me," he said.

Meechance said he was picked up several minutes later by a police canine unit some distance from the Stanley property.

"I just started walking on the road because I had nothing to hide, you know? I knew the cops were coming."

He said he only learned after being arrested that Boushie, 22, had died after being shot.

Meechance said he was speaking out because of accounts alleging a confrontation with Stanley. He said he wanted to make it clear he and his friends didn't go to Stanley's farm to cause trouble."

Farmer Gerald Stanley, 54, has been charged with second-degree murder, he pled "not guilty" in court on August 18, 2016 and was released on bail for only \$10,000. Scott Spencer, Stanley's lawyer explained in a statement: "The circumstances of the incident are not as simple as some media reports have portrayed," the statement continued, "Although the rampant speculation and misinformation is frustrating, it is not the place for, or reasonable to expect, the Stanley family to correct the public record." While it is true that there has been a publication ban on court hearings,



Four photos left to right: 1) Colten Boushie graduation photo 2) Two girls hold "Justice for Colten" & "No More Racism" signs outside the courthouse in Saskatchewan, Canada 3) Colten's family, including his brother & mother, protest outside the courthouse 4) "Justice for Colten" rally at the courthouse

and Gerald Stanley has not presented his account of events to the media, it is pretty clear that Colten Boushie was killed because of deep rooted racism in the area he grew up in, and the decision of Stanley to shoot first and ask questions later.

If there was any doubt that Colten Boushie's death is related to racism and unjust stereotypes against Indigenous people in Canada, the discussions on social media cleared up the doubt pretty quick.

Canada's Racists Respond

Headlines across Canada expressed clearly how there was an explosion of racism towards Boushie and his First Nations Community on social media following his murder. The headlines read:

August 19: "DIGGING DEEPER: Investigating social media's racist side in wake of fatal Biggar, Sask. shooting" (Global News)

August 20: "Social media comments could be criminal: Mounties" (Toronto Sun)

August 20: "Colten Boushie Shooting: Online Comments Can Be Criminal, Sask. Police Warn" (Huffington Post)

August 21: "Sask. councillor regrets social media post about Colten Boushie shooting death, says wife" (CBC News)

August 22: "Colten Boushie's death continues to cause social media firestorm" (Global News)

The most widely cited racist vitriol was the comment of Ben Kautz, a town councillor for Browning, Saskatchewan. He posted publicly in the "Saskatchewan Farmers Group" Facebook, which is no longer publicly searchable on Facebook.

Kautz wrote, "In my mind, his only mistake was leaving witnesses." Who is Kautz referring to? Other posts make it evident that he was saying the shooter, Gerald Stanley's only mistake was leaving live young witness after his crime. Kautz is now being pushed to resign for these clearly bigoted comments. However, his wife tried to justify his comments to CBC saying that he wrote them in the heat of the moment and that their family farm had recently been robbed of tools and gas. As if all robbers deserve to be killed and anyone who looks like a robber deserves to be killed, and finally all witnesses who may or may not be involved deserve to be killed too. Seems well thought out.

The second Facebook comment that was widely shared, but not credited to anyone in particular was similarly inciting violence and hate, "He [Stanley] should have shot all five and been given a medal." While these types of comments are offensive, they are also dangerous. In fact there were so many racist calls for violence against Indigenous people online that RCMP and Brad Wall, the premier of the province of Saskatchewan had to send out warnings reminding people that online threats of violence are criminally punishable acts. However, so far, there are no news stories about any of these cases being pursued.

At the same time that victim Colten Boushie's family was demanding "Justice for Colten" and trying to raise money online to pay for his funeral, the family of Gerald Stanley was organizing a steak BBQ fundraiser, to mobilize in his defence and apparently support his wife. The "Help Mrs. Stanley of Biggar, Sk." GoFundMe account has now been removed based on the website's policy to not host campaigns which are funding people facing criminal charges. It is clear Stanley is trying to set

himself up as the victim, whether with vicious online 'supporters'; his lawyers statement; his "not guilty" plea; or the above-mentioned GoFundMe campaign for his wife.

Brenda Macdougall, chair in Métis research for the Department of Geography at the University of Ottawa wrote an interesting article for the Globe & Mail Newspaper titled, "After Boushie: It's time for honest talk about racism in Saskatchewan." In her article Macdougall cites more of these dangerous online comments and attempts to explain their roots and causes by linking Boushie's death to the Black Lives Matter movement, but maybe not in the way you would expect.

She writes, "Saskatchewan is connected to the events in Ferguson, Mo., Baltimore, New York, Chicago, and Milwaukee where black men were killed by police officers. But the comparison to be made isn't about the deaths, but rather the narrative of white victimhood. This sense of white victimization were reflected in social media posts about the Boushie case, such as: "Time to go all cowboy and Indian on these useless leeches in society that live off of everyone else," or "the very sad truth is that being 'white' we can be discriminated upon more than any other race and no one faces any repercussions," or, "Canada has millions of hard working people who get up everyday and work their guts out contributing to society while ... we also have a million indigenous people many who contribute absolutely nothing to Canadian society." The traditional power and privilege reserved for white men is gradually eroding, and being replaced by more genuine participation and inclusion of historically marginalized peoples. The vile comments

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Article by Fidel Castro:

THE BIRTHDAY



Tomorrow I will turn 90 years old. I was born in a territory called Birán, in the eastern region of Cuba. It's known by that name, although it has never appeared on a map. Given its good conduct it was known for close friends and, of course, a stronghold of political representatives and inspectors involved in any commercial or productive activity typical of the neocolonized countries of the world.

On one occasion I accompanied my father to Pinares de Mayarí. I was eight or nine years old. How he enjoyed talking when he left the house in Birán! There he was the proprietor of the land where sugar cane, pasture and other agricultural crops were planted. But in Pinares de Mayarí he was not a proprietor, but a leaseholder, like many Spaniards, who were the owners of a continent under the rights granted by a papal bull, of whose existence none of the peoples and human beings of this continent were aware. Already, the knowledge transmitted then was largely treasures of humanity.

The altitude rises to approximately 500 meters, with inclined, rocky slopes, where the vegetation is scarce and at times hostile. Trees and rocks obstruct transit; suddenly, at a certain height, a vast plateau begins which I estimate extends over approximately 200 square kilometers, with rich deposits of nickel, chromium, manganese and other minerals of great economic value. From that plateau dozens of trucks of pines of great size and quality were extracted daily.

Note that I have not mentioned the gold, platinum, palladium, diamonds, copper, tin, and others that at the same time have become symbols of the economic values that human society, in its present stage of development, requires.

A few years before the triumph of the Revolution my father died. Beforehand, he suffered a lot.

Of his three sons, the second and third

were absent and distant. In revolutionary activities both fulfilled their duty. I had said that I knew who could replace me if the adversary was successful in its elimination plans. I almost laughed about the Machiavellian plans of the presidents of the United States.

On January 27, 1953, after the treacherous coup by Batista in 1952, a page of the history of our Revolution was written: university students and youth organizations, alongside the people, carried out the first March of the Torches to commemorate the centenary of the birth of José Martí.

I had already reached the conviction that no organization was prepared for the struggle we were organizing. There was complete disorientation from the political parties that mobilized the masses of citizens, from the left to the right and the center, sickened by the politicking that reigned in the country.

At the age of 6 a teacher full of ambitions, who taught in the small public school of Birán, convinced my family that I should travel to Santiago de Cuba to accompany my older sister who would enter a highly prestigious convent school. Including me was a skill of that very teacher from the little school in Birán. She, splendidly treated in the house in Birán, where she ate at the same table with the family, was convinced of the necessity of my presence. Certainly, I was in better health than my brother Ramón - who passed away in recent months - and for a long time was a classmate. I do not want to be extensive, only that the years of that period of hunger were very tough for the majority of the population.

I was sent, after three years, to the Colegio La Salle in Santiago de Cuba, where I was enrolled in the first grade. Almost three years past without them ever taking me to the cinema.

Thus began my life. Maybe I will write, if I have time, about this. Excuse me for not having done so before now, it's just I have

ideas of what a child can and should be taught. I believe that a lack of education is the greatest harm that can be done.

Humankind today faces the greatest risk of its history. Specialists in these areas can do the most for the inhabitants of this planet, whose number rose, from one billion at the end of 1800, to seven billion at the beginning of 2016. How many will our planet have within a few years?

The brightest scientists, who now number several thousand, are those who can answer this question and many others of great consequence.

I wish to express my most profound gratitude for the shows of respect, the greetings and the gifts that I have received in recent days, which give me the strength to reciprocate through ideas that I will transmit to the members of our Party and relevant organizations.

Modern technical means have allowed for scrutiny of the universe. Great powers such as China and Russia can not be subject to threats to impose the use of nuclear weapons. They are peoples of great courage and intelligence. I believe that the speech by the President of the United States when he visited Japan lacked stature, and it lacked an apology for the killing of hundreds of thousands of people in Hiroshima, in spite of the fact that they knew the effects of the bomb. The attack on Nagasaki was equally criminal, a city that the masters of life and death chose at random. It is for that reason that we must hammer on about the necessity of preserving peace, and that no power has the right to kill millions of human beings.

Fidel Castro Ruz

August 12, 2016

Artículo de Fidel Castro:

EL CUMPLEAÑOS

*** EN ESPAÑOL ***

Mañana cumpliré 90 años. Nací en un territorio llamado Birán, en la región oriental de Cuba. Con ese nombre se le conoce, aunque nunca haya aparecido en un mapa. Dado su buen comportamiento era conocido por amigos cercanos y, desde luego, por una plaza de representantes políticos e inspectores que se veían en torno a cualquier actividad comercial o productiva propias de los países neocolonizados del mundo.

En una ocasión acompañé a mi padre a Pinares de Mayarí. Yo tenía entonces ocho o nueve años. ¡Cómo le gustaba conversar cuando salía de la casa de Birán! Allí era el dueño de las tierras donde se plantaba caña, pastos y otros cultivos de la agricultura. Pero en los Pinares de Mayarí no era dueño, sino arrendatario, como muchos españoles, que fueron dueños de un continente en virtud de los derechos concedidos por una Bula Papal, de cuya existencia no conocía ninguno de los pueblos y seres humanos de este continente. Los conocimientos transmitidos eran ya en gran parte tesoros de la humanidad.

La altura se eleva hasta los 500 metros aproximadamente, de lomas inclinadas, pedregosas, donde la vegetación es escasa y a veces hostil. Árboles y rocas obstruyen el tránsito; repentinamente, a una altura determinada, se inicia una meseta extensa que calculo se extiende aproximadamente sobre 200 kilómetros cuadrados, con ricos yacimientos de níquel, cromo, manganeso y otros minerales de gran valor económico. De aquella meseta se extraían diariamente decenas de camiones de pinos de gran tamaño y calidad.

Obsérvese que no he mencionado el oro, el platino, el paladio, los diamantes, el cobre, el estaño, y otros que paralelamente se han convertido en símbolos de los valores económicos que la sociedad humana, en su etapa actual de desarrollo, requiere.

Pocos años antes del triunfo de la Revolución mi padre murió. Antes, sufrió bastante.

De sus tres hijos varones, el segundo y el tercero estaban ausentes y distantes. En las actividades revolucionarias uno y otro cumplían su deber. Yo había dicho que sabía quien podía sustituirme si el adversario tenía éxito en sus planes de eliminación. Yo casi me reía con los planes maquiavélicos de los presidentes de Estados Unidos.

El 27 de enero de 1953, tras el golpe alevoso de Batista en 1952, se escribió una página de la historia de nuestra Revolución: los estudiantes universitarios y organizaciones juveniles, junto al pueblo, realizaron la primera Marcha de las Antorchas para conmemorar el centenario del natalicio de José Martí.

Ya había llegado a la convicción de que ninguna organización estaba preparada para la lucha que estábamos organizando. Había desconcierto total desde los partidos políticos que movilizaban masas de ciudadanos, desde la izquierda a la derecha y el centro, asqueados por la politiquería que reinaba en el país.

A los 6 años una maestra llena de ambiciones, que daba clases en la escuelita pública de Birán, convenció a la familia de que yo debía viajar a Santiago de Cuba para acompañar a mi hermana mayor que ingresaría en una escuela de monjas con buen prestigio. Incluirme a mí fue una habilidad de la propia maestra de la escuelita de Birán. Ella, espléndidamente tratada en la casa de Birán, donde se alimentaba en la misma mesa que la familia, la había convencido de la necesidad de mi presencia. En definitiva tenía mejor salud que mi hermano Ramón —quien falleció en meses recientes—, y durante mucho tiempo fue compañero de escuela. No quiero ser extenso, solo que fueron muy duros los años de aquella etapa de hambre para la mayoría de la población.

Me enviaron, después de tres años, al Colegio La Salle de Santiago de Cuba, donde me matricularon en primer grado. Pasaron casi tres años sin que me llevaran jamás a un cine.

Así comenzó mi vida. A lo mejor escribo, si tengo tiempo, sobre eso. Excúsenme que no lo haya hecho hasta ahora, solo



que tengo ideas de lo que se puede y debe enseñar a un niño. Considero que la falta de educación es el mayor daño que se le puede hacer.

La especie humana se enfrenta hoy al mayor riesgo de su historia. Los especialistas en estos temas son los que más pueden hacer por los habitantes de este planeta, cuyo número se elevó, de mil millones a fines de 1800, a siete mil millones a principio de 2016. ¿Cuántos tendrá nuestro planeta dentro de unos años más?

Los científicos más brillantes, que ya suman varios miles, son los que pueden responder esta pregunta y otras muchas de gran trascendencia.

Deseo expresar mi más profunda gratitud por las muestras de respeto, los saludos y los obsequios que he recibido en estos días, que me dan fuerzas para reciprocár a través de ideas que transmitiré a los militantes de nuestro Partido y a los organismos pertinentes.

Los medios técnicos modernos han permitido escrutar el universo. Grandes potencias como China y Rusia no pueden ser sometidas a las amenazas de imponerles el empleo de las armas nucleares. Son pueblos de gran valor e inteligencia. Considero que le faltó altura al discurso del Presidente de Estados Unidos cuando visitó Japón, y le faltaron palabras para excusarse por la matanza de cientos de miles de personas en Hiroshima, a pesar de que conocía los efectos de la bomba. Fue igualmente criminal el ataque a Nagasaki, ciudad que los dueños de la vida escogieron al azar. Es por eso que hay que martillar sobre la necesidad de preservar la paz, y que ninguna potencia se tome el derecho de matar a millones de seres humanos.

Fidel Castro Ruz
Agosto 12 de 2016

REFUGEE CRISIS: Imperialism, Hate & Bigotry

By Alison Bodine

"Politicians said after the death of my family: never again! ... Everyone allegedly wanted to do something after the photos that had so moved them. But what is happening now? The dying goes on and nobody's doing anything."
- Abdullah Kurdi, father of Alan Kurdi (Bild Newspaper, August 31, 2016)

On September 2, 2015 a three year-old boy named Alan Kurdi drowned while attempting to cross the Aegean Sea with his family. The photograph of his lifeless body on a Turkish beach was front page news around the world. Major corporate media news anchors and western politicians alike spoke about the tragic death of Alan, his five year old brother Galip and his mother Rehanna, claiming that they would "take action" to end the refugee crisis.

One year later, it is clearer than ever that they were all crying crocodile tears.

The refugee crisis in Europe today has not only continued, but the depth of human suffering for refugees in Europe and Canada and the U.S. has also increased. Over the past year, more and more refugees from the Middle East and Africa in Europe and the U.S. and Canada are facing inhuman living conditions as well as the spread of racism and Islamophobia.

The Refugee Crisis Continues

Today, over 65 million people, or one in every 113 humans on the planet, has been displaced by force. In 2015, over 1 million refugees from the Middle East and Africa arrived in Europe by sea. As of August 31, 2016, a further 278,000 refugees have been



Refugees in Europe are struggling to escape war and devastation in their homelands fueled by U.S. and European imperialism.

forced to do the same this year.

In 2016 alone, nearly 3,200 people have died crossing the Mediterranean in dangerous and overcrowded rafts and boats (International

Organization for Migration – IOM). This is an over 37% increase in the number of completely needless deaths when comparing the same period in 2015 to today. In fact, despite the promises by politicians to end the needless deaths of children in the Mediterranean, an average of two children have drowned in the Mediterranean every single day over the last one and a half years.

According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the great majority of refugees that arrived in Europe from January 1, 2015 – July 31, 2016 came from three countries: Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. These three countries are also main targets of brutal imperialist interventions since the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan 15 years ago. Refugees continue to flee from their homes to Europe because they had no other option for safe life and a future in the face of the complete devastation caused by wars, occupations and foreign intervention in their countries.

Worsening Conditions for Refugees in Europe

One would think that after more than 1.5 years of summits and negotiations between European government leaders, the conditions for the more than 1.2 million refugees in Europe would be improving. However, in fact the day-to-day reality for refugees in Europe is actually getting worse. After risking their lives to escape to Europe, refugees are confronted with further danger and humiliation when they reach Italy or Greece.

"No one tells us anything — we have no idea what our future is going to be... If we knew it would be like this, we would not have left Syria. We die a thousand deaths here every day." - Shiraz Madran, living



in a make-shift refugee camp in Idomeni, Greece (New York Times, August 13, 2016)

With these words, Shiraz, a mother of four is describing what it means to be one of over 57,000 refugees stranded in Greece. The camp where she is currently living with her family is near Idomeni, a town on Greece's Northern border with Macedonia.

European response to the refugee crisis, which has closed borders and built barbed wire fences, leaves tens of thousands of refugees in complete limbo with no place to live in dignity as they await decisions on their claims to asylum. Non-governmental organizations and human rights groups have documented the squalid conditions in these camps, which include a lack of food, water, housing and healthcare, compounded with severe overcrowding. In one camp on the Greek Island of Lesbos, 40 people were found to be living a single container. Conditions for the estimated 140,000 refugees living in Italy are no better.

In addition to inhuman living conditions, refugees living in camps in Europe have also been subject to further violence and harassment from the police and army forces. As one example of this, a recent report by the Bar Human Rights Committee (BHRC) of England and Wales, highlighted a disturbing pattern of "police violence, police failure to protect residents within the camp and a lack of access to justice," for the over 8,000 refugees at a camp near Calais, France.

Europe's Inhuman Policies Fail Refugees

It is not only the neglect of European governments that has forced tens of thousands of refugees to live in inhuman conditions, but it is the complete failure of European government's to act that has stranded refugees in Greece and Italy in the first place.

This is especially true for refugees that are not from Syria. Nearly all refugee policies and resolutions passed by European, Canadian and U.S. governments have completely ignored the basic human and legal rights of refugees from many different countries across the Middle East and Africa.

Take, for example, the response of the government of the United Kingdom. Following the death of Alan Kurdi, the then Prime Minister David Cameron announced that Britain would accept 4,000 Syria refugees a year until 2020, for a total of 20,000 refugees over the next five years. Put into proper perspective, at the time of this announcement an average of 8,000 refugees were arriving in Europe every day. At the same time, this shockingly low number also represents only 0.03% of the population of the UK.

Following another pressure campaign by NGO's and some sympathetic members of Parliament in May of 2016, the government of the U.K. passed a referendum calling for the resettlement of an additional 3,000 unaccompanied child refugees. As of August, fewer than 20 had arrived according to the Guardian Newspaper. On top of this, the government is currently under fire from

children's rights advocacy groups for delaying or outright refusing to accept the resettlement of just 387 children, living alone in a devastating refugee camp in Calais, France, some of whom are waiting to be reunited with family members already living in the U.K.

This completely unjustifiable inaction in the face of the refugee crisis is even more sickening given that the U.K. is one of the main countries responsible for creating the refugee crisis in the first place. The U.K. has taken a leading role in bloody imperialist wars, occupations and interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, and Yemen that have displaced tens of millions of people.

On the whole, the European Commission's strategy for the resettlement of refugees from Greece and Italy to other European countries has been a complete disaster. After months of negotiations, the European Commission agreed to the eventual resettlement of 160,000 refugees into Europe. According to the International Organization for Migration, as of August 25, 2016, member-states have made spaces available for less than 10% of that commitment, a mere 12,990 refugees (this does not include resettlements to the U.K. or Denmark).

There is also the disastrous European Union agreement with Turkey. This plan, which was enabled beginning in March, was supposed to increase the number of Syrian refugees directly relocated from Turkey to the E.U. in exchange for Turkey's acceptance of refugees denied asylum in the E.U. after arriving on the shores of Europe. So far, only 1,152 refugees have been resettled from Turkey to the E.U., and less than 500 have been sent-back to Turkey from Greece. Once again, the so-called response from European governments is far from adequate to address the human suffering and disaster of the refugee crisis.

Bigotry, Islamophobia and Racism: Capitalist Tools for Division

"If you're not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing." – Malcolm X

There is another dimension to the humiliation and suffering that refugees face after arriving in Europe (or in Canada or the United States for that matter). On top of uncertain and inhuman living conditions, refugees are also confronted with a capitalist campaign to sew bigotry, Islamophobia and

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FROM NORTH DAKOTA TO NORTHERN BC

We Say: PEOPLE & PLANET BEFORE PIPELINES & PLUNDER!



By Thomas Davies

Things are heating up. Literally. July was the hottest month ever recorded on earth. Just like the month before that. And the month before that. And the month before that one too. According to NASA the planet is warming at a pace not experienced in the last 1000 years. While this unprecedented global warming threatens to completely unbalance earth's environment and jeopardize life on this planet, organizers demanding an end of unsustainable economic and environmental practises are turning up the heat on their actions as well. Nowhere is this more apparent than in North Dakota, where thousands of indigenous and non-indigenous protesters have set up camp to prevent the completion of the controversial Dakota Access Pipeline. Across Canada as well, the situation is becoming more tense, as the government is set to decide on several massive pipeline projects which face significant opposition across the country.

Dakota Access Pipeline

"We do not need oil to live, but we do need water, and water is a human right and not a privilege."

- Waniya Locke (Ahtna Dene, Dakota, Lakota, Anishinaabe) Standing Rock Descendent

The Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) is proposed to transport 450,000 barrels of hydraulically fracked crude oil per day from North Dakota to Illinois. Despite pressure from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Interior and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Dakota Access has failed to consult tribes and conduct a full environmental impact statement.

The current route of the DAPL will cross over the Ogallala Aquifer (one of the largest aquifers in the world) and under the Missouri River twice (the longest river in the United States). The possible contamination of these water sources which millions of people rely on make the DAPL a national threat.

The DAPL violates Article 2 of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty which guarantees that the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, whose traditional territory the pipeline crosses, shall enjoy the "undisturbed use and occupation" of their permanent homeland, the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

Unsurprisingly, the local community was not happy that this 3.8 billion dollar pipeline would be bulldozing through their backyards without consent. As the pipeline construction moved forward and it was obvious the government and big oil companies were going to ignore their concerns, a protection camp was set up in April of this year and has continued to grow. Opposition has continued to grow in other ways as well. A petition with 140,000 signatures was brought to Washington, DC demanding that US President Barack Obama repeal the water crossing permits for the pipeline and court challenge is also taking place.

The main highway into the camp has been shutdown. A military style checkpoint has been set up to harass and intimidate those wishing to join the camp. Still more and more people keep coming. Nearly 30 people have been arrested. Yet still more people keep coming. Protesters have had attack dogs bite them and have been pepper sprayed by private security agencies. Yet still more people keep coming to defend the land.

The videos of the dog attacks show an obvious attempt to provoke people into

violence to justify shutting the camp down. It failed. Video and photographic evidence shows a strong, determined opposition by people who stopped further bulldozing of ancient burial grounds with their unity and numbers. “The cops watched the whole thing from up on the hills,” said camp member Marcus Frejo. “It felt like they were trying to provoke us into being violent when we’re peaceful.”

“Now we’re getting ready for winter again,” said Joey Braun, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and an organizer with the Indigenous Environmental Network. “We’re not going anywhere.” “We’re not against the construction crews - we know they are just trying to make a living. But they are working for the wrong company.”

Meanwhile global weeks of solidarity have also been called from September 3 to 17 and the Standing Rock defenders have become an important symbol of resistance and perseverance around the world.

Farther North

In Canada the situation is becoming increasingly tense, as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the Liberal Party have promised to somehow protect the environment and continue building pipelines and other resource extraction projects which scientists say make it impossible to meet the country’s promised environmental commitments. Two key pipelines, the Kinder Morgan pipeline in British Columbia, and the Energy East pipeline from BC to the Atlantic Coast are up for government approval in the coming months.

The new Kinder Morgan pipeline would “twin” an existing pipeline which runs from Edmonton to Burnaby. This would increase the amount of oil being transported from 300,000 to 890,000 barrels per day. More than 20 municipalities and 17 First Nations along the proposed expansion route are in strong opposition to the project. When Kinder Morgan began coring operations to drill samples from Burnaby Mountain, a protest camp sprung up immediately. For weeks there were rallies of hundreds of people and 100 arrests. Kinder Morgan brought a multi-million dollar lawsuit against some of the organizers, who were able to crowdfund \$50,000 in a few days to pay legal fees. Kinder Morgan eventually decided to drop the lawsuit, and all of the lawsuits against the 100 arrested on Burnaby Mountain were eventually dropped as well. Protests against the pipeline have continued throughout Vancouver.

The National Energy Board has recommended approval of the pipeline, despite the fact the

majority of those who participated in public hearings were in opposition, and the indigenous nations whose land it would cross have still not granted permission. The government has appointed a three person panel to do further hearings, and has promised a decision by the end of December. They are clearly concerned about what the public fallout could be from approving a pipeline Justin Trudeau had previously expressed support for.

The Energy East pipeline which would span from Alberta’s oilsands to the Atlantic coast via a 4,600-kilometre pipeline was also going through the NEB public hearing process, until the NEB suspended hearings blaming a “violent disruption” when protesters entered a Montreal NEB hearing room chanting and holding a banner.

The more likely reason is the huge controversy which erupted when it was revealed that two NEB staff members, its CEO, and panel members met with then TransCanada consultant and former Quebec Premier Jean Charest back in January of 2015 – and then lied to try and cover it up

Opposition is widespread. Montreal mayor Denis Coderre, not known for his progressive views, has opposed the pipeline saying it would only deliver about \$2 million in economic benefits to the Montreal area, while a major spill could cost billions to clean up. Quebec’s Assembly of First Nations declared its opposition in July, saying the project would “fuel catastrophic climate change.” Also,

Quebec’s main farmers organization, Union des Producteurs Agricoles is publicly opposed to the project.

Widespread Opposition

The same fights are repeating themselves in cities and towns across North America. Despite police harassment the Unist’ot’en have maintained a camp since 2009 which is blocking seven pipelines that do not have Unist’ot’en consent to use their land.

A Consortium led by LNG giant Petronas has been frustrated in its attempts to build an 11 billion dollar LNG plant on Lax U’u’la / Lelu Island without community support. The protest camp their celebrated its one year anniversary on August 24th.

Explaining the community’s decision not to allow the LNG plant to move forward, Lax Kw’alaams Hereditary Chief Yahaan (Donald Wesley) said, “Development within our Traditional territories must have our Free, Prior and Informed consent. The people



Standing Rock camp members drive out crews destroying burial grounds



Protestors against Kinder Morgan pipeline. Burnaby Mountain. 2015



Lummi Nation totem pole erected on proposed Energy East pipeline route.

of Lax’walaams spoke very clearly in their rejection of the 1.25 billion dollar offer from Petronas, and this camp builds upon that rejection. This issue is not just a First Nations issue but one that will affect all British Columbians, especially those who rely upon healthy and abundant Fish stocks, of a variety of species at the mouth of the Skeena River.” The list of similar actions is long, but so are the lists made by oil executives of future development proposals.

What’s at Stake? Which Way Forward?

Inevitably when discussing opposition to these projects the debate turns to employment. It’s a fair concern, but the discussion often lacks some understanding. Previously, across North America many families relied on incomes from fishing and logging. What about now? The mills are closed and the workers laid off. The fish stocks were depleted and many fisherman found they could no longer make a living doing something their families had been doing for generations.

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Long Live Fidel!

Vancouver Celebrates the 90th Birthday of Fidel Castro!



By Janine Solanki

Saturday August 13 marked the 90th Birthday of Fidel Castro, Cuban revolutionary hero, leader and visionary. To understand who Fidel is, is to understand what the Cuban revolution is. Before Cuba's 1959 revolution, Cuba was the gambling and prostitution playground of the US, with its resources and labour force

Friday, August 12

On Friday August 12 Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) held a full day of dynamic events for Fidel Castro's 90th Birthday, in Downtown Vancouver at the Vancouver Public Library. Hundreds of people stopped by the library plaza to discuss and

tiful video greetings from: Eva Doris of the Quebec Desk of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), Javier Domokos, the Cuban Consul General in Toronto and Miguel Barnet, a member of Cuba's National Assembly and President of the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba. Over 80 people of all ages and backgrounds came to the library to enjoy the exciting evening, with most planning to return for the second day of celebrations!



Saturday, August 13

On Saturday August 13, due to the overwhelmingly positive reception on the day before, the "Fidel es Fidel" photography exposition was extended to begin an hour earlier and end an hour later than originally scheduled. Saturday's exposition attracted many passers-by, many of which stopped to discuss Fidel, the Cuban Revolution and had questions about the current ongoing US blockade against Cuba. Some also asked to have their photos taken beside one of the photos of Fidel!

exploited to the hilt and its population impoverished and facing chronic unemployment, malnutrition and preventable diseases. Under Fidel's revolutionary leadership, this small island became an example to the world for its model of free, accessible and advanced healthcare and education, and whose educated and healthy people live with dignity. Cuba's pre-revolution illiteracy rate went from around 76% to illiteracy being eliminated within one year in 1961. Cuba's high level of education, living standards and healthcare means that Cuba actually now has the demographics of a first world, industrialized country. Looking to Cuba's youth, there is a high level of political and social engagement, with youth participating in their own organizations in the elementary, secondary and university level as well as a high youth representation in Cuban government. Cuban women are also leading in the struggle for equality and women's rights, aided by free childcare, equal pay and the Cuban Women's Federation. In fact, Cuban women make up 48.9% of Cuba's National Assembly, making Cuba the country with the fourth highest representation of women in government in the world.

Thanks to Fidel's leadership, Cuba today is a beacon of hope for people all around the world, a proof that a better and more just world is possible. This is why in Cuba, around the world and here in Vancouver, Canada, supporters held events to celebrate the milestone birthday of someone who has inspired people all around the world and through multiple generations from the Cuban Revolution to today – Fidel Castro.

enjoy the open-air photo exposition "Fidel es Fidel" (Fidel is Fidel) by Cuban filmmaker and photographer, Roberto Chile. Passers-by took hundreds of leaflets, newsletters and materials explaining the historic and current role that Fidel's leadership has played throughout the development and gains of the Cuban Revolution and internationally. Included in those materials, dozens of copies of a new Battle of Ideas Press booklet "Fidel!" written by VCSC coordinator, Tamara Hansen, were purchased by those hoping to learn more about Fidel, who is often slandered and misrepresented in mainstream media in the U.S. and Canada.

In the evening, organizers, activists and supporters moved indoors at the Vancouver Public Library for the cultural and political celebration. The event, "Condemn me, it does not matter. History will absolve me" featured: speeches about the life and legacy of Fidel; live music with trovador Marcos Uribe and ranchera singer MX Katracho; moving poetry dedicated to Fidel by Wala Zaidan, Mayra Climaco, Max Tennant and Shakeel Lochan; and the Vancouver premier of the Roberto Chile documentary: "CHAVEZ Y FIDEL, Hasta Siempre." VCSC was also honoured to receive and present beau-

Later that evening the last event in the two-day celebration of Fidel's birthday took place again in the Vancouver Public Library. A full house was treated to "An Evening with Fidel", a dynamic play taken from Fidel Castro's iconic speeches, interviews and memoirs featuring actor and director, Tim Perez. Following the performance, the enthusiastic audience participated in a question and answer session with Tim Perez. No birthday celebration is complete without a cake. Participants joined in singing "Happy Birthday" while actor Tim Perez filled in the part of Fidel by blowing out the candles on the Fidel hat-shaped cake. The audience had a chance to enjoy the delicious cake and to snap photos with "Fidel" as the evening closed with a reception and the loud and united chants of:

VIVA FIDEL!
VIVA CUBA!
HASTA LA VICTORIA SIEMPRE!



LOCAL ACTIVISM

Protest Action & Public Education Fight the US Blockade on Cuba!

By Janine Solanki

On December 17th, 2014 US President Barack Obama and Cuba President Raul Castro made a historic announcement, that the U.S. and Cuban government would begin to normalize relations. Especially for the people of Cuba, who have struggled to survive under over 55 years of the US blockade on Cuba, this was welcome news. The far-reaching blockade has caused medicine, food and fuel shortages, internet bandwidth limitations, shortages of supplies for everything from scientific to technological to sport and arts development. Yet despite the blockade, Cuba has become a worldwide leader in healthcare, education, sports, arts and innovation. Just imagine how much more Cuba could achieve without the restrictive blockade around its neck?

Formed shortly after Obama's December 17th announcement, Friends of Cuba Against the US Blockade – Vancouver (FCAB-Vancouver) is holding President Obama to account. Every month, FCAB-Vancouver organizes a picket action at the US consulate in downtown Vancouver, demanding "US Lift the Blockade on Cuba Now!" and "Return Guantanamo to Cuba!"

On August 17, 2016 FCAB-Vancouver held a monthly picket action in front of the US consulate

to demand an end to this criminal blockade. With picket signs, banners and Cuban flags, Cuba supporters picketed and chanted energetically to make sure that the US government knows that action needs to go along with Obama's promising words. At this picket, speakers included Azza Rojbi, a coordinator of FCAB-Van, Brian Sproule representing the CPC-ML, and David Whittlesy, a long time veteran social justice activist. Picketers also heard a solidarity greeting phone message from Cuba solidarity activists in Ottawa, who are also holding monthly picket actions against the blockade on Cuba. FCAB-Vancouver has resolved to keep holding monthly pickets against the US blockade until it is completely lifted, and encourages more cities to join Vancouver and Ottawa in this monthly protest action.

From protest action to public education, on August 13th FCAB-Vancouver and Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) joined in the New Westminster Pride street festival. With an information table, Cuban flags and a banner reading "Cuba Says LGBTQ+ Rights are Human Rights", one of the great progresses of the Cuban Revolution was brought



to the attention of people enjoying the sunny Pride festival. Festival-goers received VCSC's special Pride edition newsletter, and were curious to come by the table to learn about Cuba's very active campaign against homophobia, how LGBTQ+ rights are protected in Cuba and how gender reassignment procedures are a right provided for free in Cuba.

As long as the criminal US blockade is still in force, and as long as Guantanamo is still occupied by the US, justice-supporting people worldwide have a job to do to campaign in defense of Cuba. To join in upcoming actions please visit www.vancubavsblockade.org or on twitter @NoBloqueoVan

US Lift the Blockade on Cuba Now!
Return Guantanamo to Cuba!

12th World Social Forum Conference in Montreal, Quebec

By Alison Bodine

This summer, more than 35,000 people gathered in Montreal, Quebec for the 12th World Social Forum. Held from August 9-14, 2016, the World Social Forum brought together social justice activists and organizers from around the world for 5 days of rallies, forums, workshops and cultural events under the banner of "Another world is needed. Together, it is possible." Among the participants, who came from 125 different countries, was a strong delegation of Cuba and Venezuela solidarity and anti-war activists from Vancouver.

The World Social Forum began with a powerful march of 15,000 people through the streets of Montreal. Among other demands, the march called for the government of Canada to grant visas to over 200 people that were not able to participate in the forum because they had been denied entry to Canada. The march also included a dynamic contingent in support of Venezuela and the Bolivarian Revolution that chanted "Viva Chavez!" and "U.S. Hands Off Venezuela!" as they marched.

Thousands of workshops were organized in the days following the opening march. These included a successful workshop by Vancouver's antiwar coalition, Mobilization Against War and

Occupation (MAWO) titled "NATO's role in the New Era of War & Occupation. Let's build a strong and effective antiwar movement in Canada and beyond."

There were also a number of workshops and events organized about Cuba and Venezuela. Chicago ALBA and the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice from Vancouver, organized a workshop on Cuba, Venezuela and the importance of organizing against U.S. intervention. This workshop brought together Venezuela and Cuba solidarity activists, a majority from Canada and the United States, and also included a special presentation by the Venezuelan Ambassador to Canada, Wilmer Barrientos, as well as Venezuelan Member of Parliament Francisco Torrealba.

The Consul General of the Bolivarian Republic in Montreal also organized two public forums during the World Social Forum, both of which were held at the Simón Bolívar Latin American Cultural Centre. The first of these important educational events was a forum titled "Human Rights in Venezuela" which featured presentations by the Venezuelans who had been violent attacked, or whose loved ones had been injured or killed, during violent opposition riots in Venezuela in 2014. The second forum discussed the political situation in Venezuela, and featured talks by Noslíw Rodríguez y Francisco Torrealba, both members of the Venezuelan parliament from the



United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV).

La Table de Concertation de Solidarité Québec-Cuba organized multiple events in solidarity with Cuba with the support of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC). This included a workshop on Cuba/U.S. relations with Miguel Barnet, the President of Cuba's Union of Authors and Artists (UNEAC) as well as a cultural and political event for the 90th birthday of Fidel Castro, the leader of the Cuban Revolution. This moving tribute to Fidel featured Canadian author and researcher Arnold August, UNEAC President Miguel Barnet and the Venezuela Ambassador to Canada, Wilmer Barrientos, among others.

Now that the World Social Forum in Montreal is over, it is our responsibility as antiwar, Latin American solidarity and social justice activists to act upon the important discussions, debates and resolutions that came out of the international gathering. We must educate, organize and mobilize for a better world!



**“I AM NOT GOING TO STAND UP TO SHOW PRIDE IN A FLAG FOR A COUNTRY THAT OPPRESSES BLACK PEOPLE AND PEOPLE OF COLOR. TO ME, THIS IS BIGGER THAN FOOTBALL AND IT WOULD BE SELFISH ON MY PART TO LOOK THE OTHER WAY. THERE ARE BODIES IN THE STREET AND PEOPLE GETTING PAID LEAVE AND GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER. IF THEY TAKE FOOTBALL AWAY, MY ENDORSEMENTS FROM ME, I KNOW THAT I STOOD UP FOR WHAT IS RIGHT.”
- COLIN KAEPERNICK**

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Six 5th Graders Take a Knee During Pledge of Allegiance Like Kaepernick

By Robert Littal • September 3, 2016

4184 views 32 comments

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USA women's football team

'It was a little nod to Kaepernick': Megan Rapinoe kneels for Star-Spangled Banner

- World Cup winner says gesture was 'very intentional'
- Rapinoe says it is important for white and black athletes to stand together

Megan Rapinoe kneeling during the national anthem. Megan Rapinoe: 'It was a little nod to Kaepernick and everything that he's standing for right now' Photograph: @gbbackfan32/Twitter



CBS Miami
Aug 29 at 5:45pm • 1,136,956 views

CONTROVERSY CONTINUES: At a post game news conference, **Colin Kaepernick** wore a T-shirt with former Cuban Leader Fidel Castro and Malcolm X. The shirt – which had photographs of their meeting in 1960 – read: "Like Minds Think Alike."

Mint Press News
Aug 31 at 7:07am • 100,572 views

Colin Kaepernick tackles both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in this scathing criticism of the two-party system... and the media largely ignored it!

For news that isn't a lapdog for the two-party dictatorship, subscribe to **Mint Press News** on YouTube → https://www.youtube.com/user/MintPressNews?sub_confirmation=1

Trending: #ColinKaepernick

COLIN KAEPERNICK TACKLES THE RIGGED TWO-PARTY SYSTEM & THE LESSER OF 2 EVILS

USA TODAY SPORTS

Report: Jersey sales for 49ers' Colin Kaepernick skyrocket after protest

Christopher Hanewinkel, USA TODAY Sports
49ers QB Colin Kaepernick is entering his sixth NFL season.

WWW.FIRETHISTIME.NET

FRENCH DEMOCRACY?

RACISM, SEXISM & ISLAMOPHOBIA UNVEILED

By Azza Rojbi

France prides itself for its motto, which dates back to the French revolution, "Liberté, égalité, fraternité" meaning "Liberty, equality, fraternity" but is it reality?

Is it a reality for the 8.7 million French people living below the poverty line? Is it a reality for the 140,000 children in France, the majority of whom are of North African descent, who drop out of school each year? Is it a reality for the 4.7 million Muslims living in France that have to live in an atmosphere of discrimination and islamophobia?

In 2005, French youth of African descent took to the streets in a series of protests following the deaths of two young Muslim men, killed while fleeing police. The loss of two young innocent lives added more fuel to an already burning fire. The government tried desperately to keep a lid on the frustration and anger of a growing number of youth. The government poured some money here and there pretending to fix the problems but avoiding the root causes.

Today, 11 years after, things have gotten worse for families living in the French suburbs (banlieues), the majority of people living in the "banlieues" are second or third generation immigrants from former French colonies in Africa. Their country's wealth and resources were plundered and exploited by French colonialism. They have been forced to leave their beloved homelands running away from poverty and lack of opportunities only to find themselves facing racism, islamophobia, poverty, unemployment and massive discrimination in France. The unemployment rate among youth from impoverished suburbs across France is two and half times greater than the national average according to the Observatoire des inégalités (Inequality Watch - A network of research organizations in France and Europe).

After the 2015 terrorist attacks that

shook France, islamophobia and racism skyrocketed and families from Muslim and North African backgrounds found themselves further alienated and discriminated against. In just the 3 weeks following the attack on Charlie Hebdo Magazine, more than 128 anti-Muslim incidents and aggressions happened across France, according to a report by the Collective Against Islamophobia in France (CCIF). There were killings, verbal and physical attacks on women wearing the veil, even grenades and shots fired at various Mosques around the country. This wave of islamophobic attacks took place, while being practically ignored by the French government and mainstream media.

Fashion police with questionable taste!

The latest addition to the French hall of shame is the "burkini ban". The burkini is a full body swimsuit, basically a wetsuit with a hoodie. It is commonly worn by Muslim women at the beach, as it is modest. A number of towns along the French Riviera banned women from wearing the burkini with the excuse that it is "unhygienic", "a provocation by Islamists" and "contrary to French values". France's Prime Minister, Manuel Valls, supported the ban and called the burkini part of a "political project" to enslave women. Laurence Rossignol, the French Minister for the Families, Children and Women's Rights, also spoke in favor of the ban on burkinis. In an interview with Le Parisien Newspaper, she said, "The burkini agitates so much because of its collective political dimension. It does not only concern the women



The "burkini ban" in France leads police to make woman remove clothing on a beach in Nice, France August 2016

who wear it. The burkini is the symbol of a political project that is hostile to diversity and empowerment."

The amount of ridiculous and irrational logic here amazes me! The outfit worn by a woman while enjoying her time with family and friends at the beach is somehow linked to an extremist political project?!

Telling women what to wear or not to wear when going to enjoy a day at the beach, this is extremism!

The photos taken on the beach in Nice, France that went viral on social media were outrageous: four armed male police officers surrounded a woman who was peacefully sleeping on the sand wearing leggings, a long sleeve shirt and a head scarf. They forced her to remove her long sleeve shirt before writing her a ticket. This is the French government's way to uphold women's rights: humiliating women and ordering them to undress in public!

The state and the police have no business telling women how they should dress. Any law that forces a woman to undress in

● No woman in a burqa (or a hijab or a burkini) has ever done me any harm. But I was sacked (without explanation) by a man in a suit. Men in suits misfold me pensions and endowments, costing me thousands of pounds. A man in a suit led us on a disastrous and illegal war. Men in suits led the banks and crashed the world economy. Other men in suits then increased the misery to millions through austerity. If we are to start telling people what to wear, maybe we should ban suits.
Henry Stewart
London

Letter to the Editor of The Guardian Newspaper August 26, 2016

public is sexist and misogynistic. Claiming that women who choose to wear a burkini somehow pose a threat to “the republic” is laughable. However, the police and government actions are a clear violation of these women’s civil and human rights, fining them and forcing them to remove their clothing in public is a clear violation of their bodies. The French Prime Minister and other French officials who have defended the burkini ban, are defending a sexist and islamophobic attack to further humiliate and alienate Muslim women.

For them it is inconceivable that a Muslim woman spends a day at a beach, enjoying the sun, sand and waves. She must be out there plotting against French values and freedoms! As French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said: “The burkini is an anti-social political project... It is not compatible with the values of France and the Republic. Faced with such provocations, the Republic must defend itself.” These types of comments push French Muslim women further out of public spaces and public life. These types of comments help to confine women to their homes on a sunny summer day while their fellow citizens enjoy a day at the beach or the pool. It is unclear which French values are being defended here?! Not liberty, nor equality, nor fraternity!

If Manuel Valls really cared about championing women’s rights maybe he should stop telling women what to wear and start listening to the real issues they care about: women are gravely hit by the high unemployment rates, especially among youth of the banlieues (suburbs). One woman dies every two days from domestic violence, and more than 86,000 women a year are victims of rape or attempted rape. In France, men earn a wage 34.6% higher than women. Today, France is ranked in 63rd place internationally for female participation in parliament (even lower than their former colonies Tunisia and Algeria).

Maybe Manuel Valls and his government should focus on these real struggles for égalité (equality) and leave the burkini alone!

Divide and Conquer

Vilifying Muslims and obsessing about the burkini helps distract attention from the many social and economic problems in France. It creates animosity and fear towards people from the Middle East and North Africa and scapegoats Muslim immigrants and refugees as responsible for the failures of capitalism in France. Islam is the new boogeyman and islamophobia is the new tool to justify their wars at home and abroad.

France never broke away from its shameful colonial exploitive history. From the days of the Algerian war until today the French military continues its imperialist wars and missions in Africa and the Middle East. France was one of the first countries to beat the drums of war against Libya and joined the U.S. led coalition in bombing and destroying that country causing over 400,000 Libyans to flee their homes. According to the French armed forces website, the French military counts around 10,300 military personnel deployed in overseas operations (as of February 25, 2015). Over 3,000 troops are spread throughout Africa and a total of 3,200 military troops are deployed to Iraq.

Islamophobia is a tool for France and other imperialist ruling classes, not only to divide their own societies and put people against each other, but more importantly to mobilize the masses of non-Muslims in imperialist countries against Muslim people around the world. This helps their purpose of justifying their long run wars and occupations in their efforts to dominate the global market and economy.

Together we stand!

The outrageous photos from the beach in Nice made headlines around the world. A huge amount of support and indignation poured in on social media. Muslims and non-Muslims joined together to voice their opposition to the burkini ban and the rise of islamophobia in France, Europe, and also here in North America.

Numerous protests took place around the world in front of French embassies and consulates to oppose the ban. A make shift beach appeared in front of the French embassy in London, women wearing bikinis, burkinis, swimsuits and all sorts of clothing, gathered with signs and banners denouncing islamophobia and standing up for a woman’s right to dress as she pleases. The “Wear What You Want Beach Party” was an important show of strength and unity in fighting against racism and sexism.

Fariah Syed, one of the organizers of this protest told the Metro Newspaper, “We set up the event to show solidarity with Muslim women, not only in France but around the world.” She continued, “Women should be allowed to wear what they want, when they want. Women should be treated as equals regardless of their religion.”

On Friday August 26, 2016 France’s highest administrative court overturned the ban on burkinis. This ruling by the Council of State specifically concerns the ban in the town of Villeneuve-Loubet. It is unclear if others towns will uphold the ban.

The struggle against islamophobia in France and internationally continues. Canada is no stranger to the rise of islamophobia and racism. On August 6, 2016 two violent attacks took place in Burnaby, British Columbia, where a man assaulted a women wearing the veil while shouting racial slurs.

As peace loving people, we have a duty to organize against racism and islamophobia. We must work to educate and mobilize Muslim and non-Muslim communities to counter the imperialist government and mass media campaign to divide us based on hatred and fear. We must build mass organizations to unite all working, poor and oppressed people in the fight against racism, islamophobia and sexism.

Follow Azza on Twitter: @Azza_R14



Women hold a beach party outside the French Embassy in London to protest the 'burkini ban' August 25, 2016

“PALESTINE” THE DIRTIEST WORD IN CANADIAN BOURGEOIS POLITICS



By Noah Fine

After suggesting to the media she is considering stepping down as leader of the Green Party of Canada, MP Elizabeth May has decided to continue on as the party's leader. This came after the Green Party voted in favor of two resolutions sympathizing with the Palestinian cause by way of supporting the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign (BDS) and calling for the Canada Revenue Agency to revoke the charitable organization status of the Jewish National Fund (JNF) at the party's policy convention on August 7th.

After the policy convention May told CBC in an interview, “I think it is wrong-headed for the party... It's a very polarizing and divisive campaign.” May continued, “You're talking to a broken-hearted person who is trying to figure out the best way forward.”

Why so “broken-hearted” Mrs. May?

Leading up to and following the vote, the Greens were hit by a storm of right-wing and Zionist attention condemning the Green Party as being anti-Semitic. The National Post printed in their Ideas section on July 27 an article by JNF Chief Executive Officer, Josh Cooper in which he concluded, “While the impact is immediately felt by the Jewish community, what's ultimately at stake is the Green party's future in Canadian politics. Will the Greens reclaim their party from fringe anti-Israel ideologues and conspiracy theorists? Or will they placate an extreme agenda at the cost of their own ability to connect with mainstream Canadians?” In the previous statement we can see why May is so “broken-hearted”.

With a relative level of success for the Green Party, having elected MP Elizabeth May in two consecutive Canadian Parliaments, it would seem that the Green Party's main leadership, in contrast

to their membership, share Cooper's sentiments. But at what expense and who are these “mainstream Canadians” that Cooper believes will be alienated by the Green's policies on the Palestine/Israel conflict? If what is meant by “mainstream Canadians” is the mainstream political establishment in Canada, then Cooper and like-minded Zionist sympathizers and political opportunists are absolutely correct.

Canada's Role in the Occupation of Palestine

Canada has had no small role in the occupation of Palestine since its inception. Having been one of the first countries to support Israel's claim to the territory up to defending Israel on each and every major assault on the Palestinian people no matter how criminal, the political establishment in Canada has been consistent. Each of the big 3 political parties have all had their part in either directly supporting the brutal occupation of Palestine by Israel or at least working to silence opposition to the Zionist project.

In 2006, Israel leveled southern Lebanon

bombing and killing thousands of civilians. At the end of the more than 30 days of Israeli war 1,300 Lebanese people had been killed and 1 million displaced. This came in retaliation for the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers. In reaction to Israel's indiscriminate bombing of innocents in Lebanon, Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper stated that Israel demonstrated a “measured response” to the situation.

As has been reported in previous issues of Fire This Time, the NDP also has a long history of criminalizing opposition to Israel within its' own ranks by firing or disciplining NDP candidates who took a position in favor of the oppressed Palestinian people.

Most recently in February of 2016 the Liberal Government under the leadership of PM Trudeau pushed a motion through parliament condemning people in Canada for supporting the BDS campaign trying to silence and scare Canadians from taking a position sympathizing with the Palestinian cause.

With that in mind it's no wonder why MP Elizabeth May wants to maintain the status quo on the issue and present the green party as a reasonable and non-controversial member of the political establishment of Canada. And if for any reason these so-called “mainstream Canadians” could be alienated by the Green Party's policies on Palestine it's likely due to the fact that every government Canada has had since the beginning of the occupation of Palestine in 1948 by Israel has supported Israel 100% and the mainstream media in Canada rarely if ever displays the reality of the life of Palestinian people under





Vancouver Rally against the siege on Gaza. July 2014.

brutal occupation.

Is Criticism of Israel Really Controversial?

A quick look into the history of the brutal occupation of Palestine by Israel leaves little doubt why the Green Party membership, which includes a large layer of progressive minded people, voted in favor of the policies.

During Israel's 2008-09 siege on Gaza, Israel used the illegal chemical weapon White Phosphorus in its savage attack on the Palestinian people. The weapon was even used attacking a UN school where innocent people including children were fleeing the onslaught of Israeli terror.

During the 2014 Israeli war on Gaza 12,600 homes were completely destroyed, 6,500 severely damaged and 150,000 homes were left uninhabitable. The 2014 assault left 2,100 Palestinians dead while only 66 Israeli Defense Force soldiers were killed.

Can the Green Party membership, or anyone concerned with human rights and the environment be blamed for criticizing Israel and defending the plight of the Palestinian people knowing some of the facts?

The unfortunate truth is that the mainstream political establishment in Canada, mainstream media and the representatives of Zionism and the Israeli state are aware that although slow, the Green Party is garnering attention from people in Canada as an alternative. What they are trying to avoid is this small party bringing attention to and popularizing the very real issue of Israel's brutal

occupation of Palestine and the Canadian political establishments complete and uncritical support for Israel.

What "mainstream Canadians" Should Do

It's the responsibility of people in Canada who believe in human rights to defend the Green Party's policies on Palestine whether it be against the mainstream Canadian political establishment or the Green Party's leadership itself. Green Party members stood up to take a position in favor of the just cause of the Palestinian people and deserve support not only for their political position but also in defense of freedom of speech.

As long as Israel has the support of the major parties from the wealthiest countries in the world they will continue to be able to act in complete impunity not only in contradiction to the law but to human rights as well.

Criticizing Israel is no more anti-Semitic than criticizing the Islamic State terrorist group is Islamophobic. And quite contrary not criticizing Israel simply because of it's pretensions as a religious state is more dangerous and in itself anti-Semitic.

Palestinian, Jewish and all people in Canada and around the world need to unite and call for an end to the occupation of Palestine by Israel. Only when the Israeli State is dismantled can Jews and Palestinians begin to build a life and future together in peace in a single democratic state.

*Follow Noah Fine on Twitter:
@noahfine*

OUR HERITAGE



**Bernadette Devlin
McAliskey**

23 April 1947 (age 69)

*Irish revolutionary politician and
independence fighter*

"It did not seem to me that prejudice, poverty, discrimination, repression and racism were confined to the North of Ireland. I could see them everywhere I spoke and still cannot comprehend the mentality that argues that I should have pretended not to see them, because it wasn't my business."

"A lot of us didn't expect to live the week out. Some of us had visions of spending fifty years in prison for treason. We got over it. We quickly learned that ours would be a long fight and that most of us would live to see it through. We also learned that if we dared to struggle and dared to win, we could finally create in Ireland the kind of society that would reclaim the land of Ireland for all the people of Ireland. We know it won't be an easy fight. But we're determined to win this time."



In the below article U.S. political prisoner and soldier of humanity Chelsea Manning discusses the cruelty and inhumanity of the use of solitary confinement in prisons.

Although Chelsea faces the torture of solitary confinement from within the U.S. military prison system, solitary confinement is in no way a practice isolated to the U.S. In Canada, the practice is often referred to as "segregation." According to a Globe and Mail article from November of 2015 on any given day there is an average of 1800 prisoners in Canada held in solitary confinement.

Just as Chelsea has contemplated, and recently attempted suicide, women within the Canadian prison system have also been brought to the same desperate actions after being subjected to the psychological and physical torture of solitary confinement. In April, 2016, Terry Baker, 30 years old, died of an apparent suicide while in solitary confinement at the Grand Valley Institution for Women, Kitchener, Ontario. Only nine years previous, a 19 year old woman named Ashley Smith who was held in the same Kitchener prison, also died of an apparent suicide.

By Chelsea Manning

Shortly after arriving at a makeshift military jail, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, in May 2010, I was placed into the black hole of solitary confinement for the first time. Within two weeks, I was contemplating suicide.

After a month on suicide watch, I was transferred back to US, to a tiny 6 x 8ft (roughly 2 x 2.5 meter) cell in a place that will haunt me for the rest of my life: the US Marine Corps Brig in Quantico, Virginia. I was held there for roughly nine months as a "prevention of injury" prisoner, a designation the Marine Corps and the Navy used to place me in highly restrictive solitary conditions without a psychiatrist's approval.

For 17 hours a day, I sat directly in front of at least two Marine Corps guards seated behind a one-way mirror. I was not allowed

"Solitary confinement is 'no touch' torture, and it must be abolished..."

to lay down. I was not allowed to lean my back against the cell wall. I was not allowed to exercise. Sometimes, to keep from going crazy, I would stand up, walk around, or



dance, as "dancing" was not considered exercise by the Marine Corps.

To pass the time, I counted the hundreds of holes between the steel bars in a grid pattern at the front of my empty cell. My eyes traced the gaps between the bricks on the wall. I looked at the rough patterns and stains on the concrete floor – including one that looked like a caricature grey alien, with large black eyes and no mouth, that was popular in the 1990s. I could hear the "drip drop drip" of a leaky pipe somewhere down the hall. I listened to the faint buzz of the fluorescent lights.

For brief periods, every other day or so, I was escorted by a team of at least three guards to an empty basketball court-sized area. There, I was shackled and walked around in circles or figure-eights for 20 minutes. I was not allowed to stand still, otherwise they would take me back to my cell.

I was only allowed a couple of hours of visitation each month to see my friends, family and lawyers, through a thick glass partition in a tiny 4 x 6ft room. My hands and feet were shackled the entire time. Federal agents installed recording equipment specifically to monitor my conversations, except with my lawyers.

The United Nations special rapporteur

on torture, Juan Mendez, condemned my treatment as "cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment", describing "the excessive and prolonged isolation" I was placed under for that period of time. However, he didn't stop there. In a preface to the 2014 Spanish edition of the Sourcebook on Solitary Confinement, written by Méndez he strongly recommends against any use of solitary confinement beyond 15 days.

As Mendez explains:

Prolonged solitary confinement raises special concerns, because the risk of grave and irreparable harm to the detained person increases with the length of isolation and the uncertainty regarding its duration. In my public declarations on this theme, I have defined prolonged solitary confinement as any period in excess of 15 days. This definition reflects the fact that most of the scientific literature shows that, after 15 days, certain changes in brain functions occur and the harmful psychological effects of isolation can become irreversible.

Unfortunately, conditions similar to the ones I experienced in 2010-11 are hardly unusual for the estimated 80,000 to 100,000 inmates held in these conditions across the US every day.

In the time since my confinement at Quantico, public awareness of solitary confinement has improved by orders of magnitude. People all across the political spectrum – including some who have never been in solitary or known anyone who has – are now beginning to question whether this practice is a moral and ethical one. In June 2015, US supreme court justice Anthony Kennedy called the prison system "overlooked" and "misunderstood", stating that he welcomes a case that would allow the court to review whether or not solitary confinement is cruel and unusual under the US constitution.

The evidence is overwhelming that it should be deemed as such: solitary confinement in the US is arbitrary, abused and unnecessary in many situations. It is cruel, degrading and inhumane, and is effectively a "no touch" torture. We should end the practice quickly and completely.

Private Chelsea Manning is a US soldier sentenced to 35 years in prison for leaking classified US diplomatic cables, videos and documents. Published on the whistleblower site Wikileaks, they exposed US war crimes around the world including mass killings, torture, corruption, and the government's attempted cover-up of their atrocities. For more info visit: www.chelseamanning.org

Follow Chelsea on Twitter: @xychelsea

Cuba Strongly Rejects Coup in Brazil

Declaration by the Revolutionary Government of Cuba:

The Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Cuba strongly rejects the parliamentary and judicial coup d'état perpetrated against President Dilma Rousseff.

The Government's estrangement from the President, without presenting any evidence of corruption or crimes of responsibility against her, as well as from the Workers' Party (PT) and other left-wing allied political forces, is an act of defiance against the sovereign will of the people who voted for her.

The governments headed by Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff implemented a socio-economic model that made it possible for Brazil to take a step forward in areas such as production growth with social inclusion, the creation of jobs, the fight against poverty, the eradication of extreme poverty among more than 35 million Brazilians who used to live in inhumane conditions and income increase for another 40 million; the expansion of opportunities in the areas of education and health for the people, including those sectors who had been previously marginalized. During this period, Brazil has been an active promoter of Latin American and Caribbean integration. The defeat of the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA), the celebration of the Latin American and Caribbean Summit on Integration and Development (CALC) which led to the creation of CELAC and foundation of UNASUR are transcendental events in the recent history of the region which show the leading role played by that country.

Likewise, Brazil's approach to the Third World nations, particularly Africa; its active membership in the BRICS Group (made up by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa); and its performance at the United Nations Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); and the World Trade Organization, among others, are an acknowledgement of its international leadership.

Equally praiseworthy has been Brazil's performance under the Workers' Party governments in crucial international issues for the defense of peace, development, the environment and the programs against hunger.

The efforts made by Lula and Dilma to reform the political system and organize the funding of parties and their campaigns as well as in support of the investigations started against corruption and the independence of the institutions responsible for such investigations are too well known.

The forces that are currently exercising power have announced the privatization of deep water oil reserves and social programs curtailments. Likewise, they are proclaiming a foreign policy focused on the relations with the big international centers of power. Quite a few among those who are impeaching the President are currently under investigation for acts of corruption.

What happened in Brazil is another expression of the offensive of imperialism and the oligarchy against the revolutionary and progressive governments of Latin America and the Caribbean which threatens peace and stability of nations and is contrary to the spirit and the letter of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, signed at the Second CELAC Summit in January, 2014, in Havana by the Heads of State and Government of the region.

Cuba reiterates its solidarity with President Dilma and comrade Lula as well as with the Worker's Party, and is confident that the Brazilian people will defend the social achievements that have been attained and will resolutely oppose the neoliberal policies that others may try to impose on them and the plundering of its natural resources.

Havana, August 31, 2016.

(Cubaminrex)

Declaración del Gobierno Revolucionario de Cuba:

El Gobierno Revolucionario de la República de Cuba rechaza enérgicamente el golpe de estado parlamentario-judicial que se ha consumado contra la Presidenta Dilma Rousseff.

La separación del gobierno de la Presidenta, sin que se presentara ninguna evidencia de delitos de corrupción ni crímenes de responsabilidad, y con ella del Partido de los Trabajadores (PT) y otras fuerzas políticas de izquierda aliadas, constituye un acto de desacato a la voluntad soberana del pueblo que la eligió.

Durante los gobiernos de Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva y Dilma Rousseff, se impulsó un modelo económico-social que permitió a Brasil dar un salto en su crecimiento productivo con inclusión social, la defensa de sus recursos naturales, la generación de empleo, el combate a la pobreza, la salida de la miseria de más de 35 millones de brasileños que vivían en condiciones inhumanas y la elevación del ingreso de otros 40 millones, la ampliación de las oportunidades en la educación y la salud del pueblo, incluidos sectores hasta entonces marginados.



Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff & Cuban President Raul Castro

En este período, Brasil ha sido un activo impulsor de la integración latinoamericana y caribeña. La derrota del Acuerdo de Libre Comercio para las Américas (ALCA), la convocatoria a la Cumbre de América Latina y el Caribe sobre Integración y Desarrollo (CALC) que llevó a la posterior creación de la CELAC, y la constitución de UNASUR, son acontecimientos trascendentales en la historia más reciente de la región que demuestran el protagonismo de ese país.

Asimismo, su proyección hacia las naciones del Tercer Mundo, en especial de África; su activa membresía en el Grupo BRICS (Brasil, Rusia, India, China y Sudáfrica) y su desempeño en el marco de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas, la Organización

de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (FAO) y la Organización Mundial del Comercio, entre otras, constituyen un reconocimiento a su liderazgo internacional.

Merece elogio también la ejecutoria brasileña bajo los gobiernos del PT en temas cruciales de la situación internacional en defensa de la paz, el desarrollo, el medio ambiente y los programas contra el hambre.

Son ampliamente conocidos los esfuerzos de Lula y Dilma por reformar el sistema político y ordenar el financiamiento de los partidos y sus campañas, así como en el apoyo a las investigaciones contra la corrupción que fueron abiertas y a la independencia de las instituciones encargadas de ellas.

Las fuerzas que ahora ejercen el poder han anunciado medidas privatizadoras sobre las reservas petrolíferas en aguas profundas y cortes a los programas sociales. Igualmente, anuncian una política exterior que privilegia las relaciones con los grandes centros de poder internacionales. No pocos de quienes juzgan a la Presidenta están bajo investigación por actos de corrupción.

Lo ocurrido en Brasil es otra expresión de la ofensiva del imperialismo y la oligarquía contra los gobiernos revolucionarios y progresistas de América Latina y el Caribe, que amenaza la paz y la estabilidad de las naciones, contraviniendo el espíritu y la letra de la Proclama de América Latina y el Caribe como Zona de Paz, firmada en la II Cumbre de la CELAC, en enero de 2014, en La Habana por los Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno de la región.

Cuba ratifica su solidaridad con la Presidenta Dilma y el compañero Lula, con el Partido de los Trabajadores, y expresa su confianza en que el pueblo brasileño defenderá las conquistas sociales alcanzadas, se opondrá con determinación a las políticas neoliberales que intenten imponerle y al despojo de sus recursos naturales.

La Habana, 31 de agosto de 2016.

(Cubaminrex)

REVOLUTION & COUNTER- REVOLUTION IN VENEZUELA



Cindy Sheehan interview with
Fire This Time Editorial Board
member Alison Bodine

Transcription by Alison Bodine



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro addresses large pro-government rally on Sept. 1, 2016



Cindy Sheehan

The following interview with Alison Bodine, the Coordinator of the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign by prominent U.S. antiwar and social justice activist and "Peace Mom" Cindy Sheehan first aired on the Cindy Sheehan's Soapbox" radio on September 4, 2016. To hear the below interview, as well as for other interesting and informative podcasts and articles, please visit <http://cindyshsheehanssoapbox.blogspot.ca/>

Cindy Sheehan is an American social justice organizer whose son, Casey Sheehan, was killed during the Iraq War. She attracted



Alison Bodine

national and international media attention in August 2005 for her extended antiwar protest at a camp outside then President George W. Bush's Texas ranch. She has continued to be very active in many social justice movements including travelling to Venezuela and Cuba and writing the book, "Revolution, A Love Story: A Better World is Possible" about Venezuela.

Cindy Sheehan: Welcome back to the Soapbox, I'm your host Cindy Sheehan. This week our guest is Alison Bodine. Alison is an antiwar and social justice activist, writer and researcher at the newspaper Fire This Time. She also works with Venezuela solidarity networks in the U.S. and Canada. We will be talking about corporate media lies about what is happening in Venezuela and what is really happening in Venezuela.

Alison Bodine, welcome to Cindy's Sheehan's Soapbox.

Alison Bodine: Thank you Cindy, good morning, thanks for having me.

Cindy: No problem, tell my listeners a little bit about yourself, your background and why you are so interested in Venezuelan politics and what is happening in Venezuela.

Alison: Today, I am the Coordinator of a campaign in Vancouver, Canada we have, the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign. Fire This Time is a social justice movement, as well as a social justice newspaper that is distributed for free up here in Vancouver, British Columbia and sent around the world.

We have been publishing for just over 10 years.

I have been involved since the beginning of Fire This Time, when I moved here from Colorado. I am originally from the United States and that is where I became interested in issues of social justice.

The U.S. invaded Afghanistan and Iraq when I was in high school and I became involved in antiwar protests. Then, I came to Vancouver, British Columbia and got involved in the movement here and began to learn that the world is not only about the death and destruction caused around the world by the U.S. government and their allies, but that it is also a world that has hope for building a better world. I found out more about Cuba and the Cuban Revolution as well as about Venezuela and the Bolivarian Revolution.

I really became involved in Venezuela solidarity work because of that hope that I believe that Venezuela offers to people around the world. That hope that we can build a more just and equal society based on social justice, based on the interests of the masses of the people, and that all of it is possible. Seeing Venezuela and Cuba as that hope, and working in solidarity campaigns here in Canada has been a big important part of my life ever since I found them.

Cindy: For my listeners this is a frequent subject on Cindy Sheehan's Soapbox and I wrote a book about the Bolivarian Revolution called "Revolution, A Love Story." But, tell my listeners, refresh their memories, what was the vision of Hugo

Chavez and his Bolivarian Revolution?

Alison: When Hugo Chavez was elected in 1998 and took office in 1999 it was to build a Venezuela that was sovereign and self-determined, free from U.S. chains, the yoke of the United States and imperialism which had been ruling for hundreds of years. It was to reverse the ills that had been brought by colonization more than 500 years ago and to build a more just and equal society in Venezuela. This started with basic human rights: healthcare, education, the right to access to food and dignified housing, the right to work. All of these things became the goal of the Bolivarian Revolution, to fight for the masses of poor and working people in Venezuela and to build a more just and equal society. Socialism became the path towards this. Hugo Chavez said it directly.

I think that the most concrete action that we can look towards today, are the beginning of the social missions in Venezuela, which still exist today and are building and growing. They are the hallmark of the Bolivarian Revolution, social missions meant to bring people those basic human rights.

Cindy: Part of the vision also, of the Bolivarian Revolution wasn't just to build social and economic equality in Venezuela, but it also was to unite Latin America and the Caribbean together against the United States. That was becoming very successful during Chavez' lifetime. It seemed like he made Cuba and Fidel prominent and more respected in Latin America and the Caribbean. The OAS states finally united together and said that if Cuba is not going to be involved anymore, we are not going to be involved, except of course for the United States and Canada. But, now it looks like since Chavez' death, the United States has re-doubled its efforts to undermine that solidarity.

Alison: It is very true; I think that has been one of the most significant gains of the Bolivarian Revolution. We can talk about the development of ALBA, for instance, and Mercosur. These organizations are meant to be, and have really become, a counter-balance to the free trade agreements that have been run by the United States and their allies



across Latin America.

Bringing solidarity between countries, including Venezuela, is definitely a big part of the Bolivarian Revolution. Even its name, after Simon Bolivar, the great Latin American Liberator whose goal was also to unite Latin America, is definitely where they take their essence and vision as you have said.

I think that Venezuela brought what we could refer to as the “winds of change” to Latin America, with the inspiration of the Cuban Revolution and working together through that experience, the Bolivarian Revolution has also brought with it other social movements across Latin America. Ecuador, Bolivia, all of these countries. The United States is very concerned with overthrowing the Bolivarian Revolution and all of the positive changes that have taken place across Latin America, as well as breaking that solidarity.

The OAS has been part of this. The motion to except Cuba definitely was positive but as we have seen with Venezuela, especially over the last few months, the OAS, the head of the OAS, is still very much in the hands of the United States and is really making moves to break that solidarity and overthrow the Bolivarian Revolution.

Cindy: ...which really has been happening since 1998. Since Chavez was elected, the United States has worked really hard to undermine that. Of course, they were not successful during Chavez life, but as I said earlier they re-doubled their efforts to get Venezuela back into the hands of the Oil-garchy and other profiteers. They have worked over-time to destabilize that country but we hear nothing but lies here in the United States about what's happening in Venezuela. So, that is what I wanted to have you on here

to talk about, the so-called food shortages, the crime, you know everything that we hear about “evil Venezuela.” We need to dispel those myths and talk about why they are happening and what's really happening.

Alison: Thank you again for having me on here to talk about that, because I think, really, if we look around, the biggest thing that is not being discussed in media here, in North America especially or in any Western media, is what is really happening in Venezuela.

Instead they are talking about Venezuela using very exaggerated terms, very “crisis” terms.

We could look at just two days ago, September 1. I will start there as an excellent example of the way that media is using lies and manipulations and really deliberately leaving out especially the role of the U.S. government in Latin America, historically, and today. The U.S. government is funding organizations that are working against the interests of the majority of people in Latin America and Venezuela.

September 1 was a day in Venezuela in which the opposition right-wing, the violent opposition right-wing which is backed by the United States, had declared a “takeover of Caracas,” the capital city of Venezuela. During these actions they attempted to bring supporters of the opposition into Caracas as well as made threats for further action against the Bolivarian Revolution and against the democratically-elected government of President Nicolas Maduro. The media two days ago showed photos of these demonstrations, they showed photos of opposition marches in the streets of Caracas and also attempted to portray the government of Venezuela as being heavy-handed against these protests.

But, they never once showed photos of the masses of people in support of the government and of the Bolivarian Revolution that marched in the streets, not only in Caracas, but in every public square in cities across Venezuela. They also never talked about the fact that these same organizers of this so-called takeover of Caracas, were also the same that organized violent riots in 2014 known as the Guarimbas which killed 43 people and injured over 700.

They didn't talk either, of course, about the 2002 attempted coup against Hugo Chavez that was overturned by the people of Venezuela in less than 48 hours, and the various coup attempts that have taken place between now and then. They didn't bring that into the context when they talked about Venezuela arresting people with bomb-making materials, or finding someone with a sniper gun. The media completely ignored this pattern of violence from the opposition. Instead they tried to say that those people marching in the streets for the opposition were those that were "fighting for democracy," were those that were "fighting for their right to have their voices heard."

This is just one example of the way that media ignores, and completely refuses to discuss the role of the United States in Venezuela and in Latin America, and their support of this violent right-wing opposition. They ignore it because it helps them in their overall campaign to be the mouthpiece of the U.S. government, a government which is interested in overthrowing the Bolivarian Revolution and the example that they have set for people not only in Latin America, but also around the world. That is why Venezuela is such a threat, because it represents hope for people in the Middle East, in North Africa, hope for all oppressed people to that demonstrates that you can take your sovereignty and self-determination back and fight for a country independent of the United States.

As well, the September 1 protests took place in the context of an economic war in Venezuela. This has been another example of how major capitalist media around the world has ignored what is actually happening on the ground in Venezuela. They use words like "massive hunger" and "starvation," they claim that there is so much of shortage that hoards of people are even "eating a horse" as one media reported. These are really exaggerated claims of what is happening in Venezuela, which is facing an economic crisis, but also taking steps to remedy it.

Currently, Venezuela's exports largely depend on oil exports. The price of oil has plummeted, which has created problems with the economy of Venezuela. But the other thing that they don't describe ever, is the fact that the vast majority of food distribution and production, as



well as the distribution and production of basic goods, is not in the hands of the Venezuelan government. It is still in the hands of private companies and factories, multi-nationals that operate in Venezuela.

Cindy: Talk about what happened to Kimberly Clark, for example.

Alison: Exactly, Kimberly Clark is a name that is familiar to all of us because it is a company that operates in the United States and North America. It is a multinational, gigantic company that was producing basically hygiene goods in Venezuela. They had a factory in Aragua, Venezuela that they shut down. They decided that it wasn't making enough profit and they closed the doors, firing over 900 employees. They also claimed at the time that they didn't have the raw materials that they needed to make their goods. This is something that different private factories have been saying in Venezuela, especially over the last two years or so.

So the Venezuelan government responded to this and investigated, of course, and found the opposite of what the company had claimed. That the warehouses were, in fact, well-stocked and that the company had just shut down the factory, like I said before, because they didn't think they were making enough profit. In Venezuela there are very strict rules about how much goods can be sold for and this has created problems for multinational companies and those that are in the hands of the right-wing and capitalist class in Venezuela.

Now the government of Venezuela has turned over the factory to the workers, and it has been re-opened and it has continued production. There has been a visible improvement in the availability of basic goods in Venezuela because this factory is once again producing. It's goods are not being hoarded anymore, it

is not being deliberately slowed down in production anymore by their capitalist bosses. They really have been able to take over control and continue producing what they need to in order to supply basic goods to the Venezuelan population. This one factory, for example, produced about 20% of the national demand for these sort of basic hygiene goods in Venezuela, so there is a very significant impact in getting it up and running again normally.

Cindy: See, that's the issue. Some of us feel like that kind of thing, like the government taking over businesses and production and putting it in the hands of the people Venezuela could have been done faster, could have been done more. But, you know I have spent significant time with Chavez and he would impress that he is, he was, the President of everybody in Venezuela and if companies were price-gouging, or they were taking advantage of the people in Venezuela there would be no issue about it, they would take that industry or the stores and they would nationalize those industries.

Talk about that I little bit. The misconception here in the United States of course is that Chavez went in there with a heavy hand and he didn't even nationalize completely the oil industry, which I feel like he should have.

Alison: I think that we all have our own ideas about Venezuela and what we think could have been done or not been done. But, I think it is important what you said, that it has to all be put in context as well.

As solidarity activists first of all, in the United States, in North America, I would say it is our main role to defend the sovereignty and self-determination of Venezuela and let them figure out their economy and how they want to run the country based on end to U.S. intervention in the country. That is our main role.

But, I would also say that that there has been moves made by both President Hugo Chavez as well as by Nicolas Maduro to really combat this price-gouging, the hoarding. But it is a balance where we have to understand more about the context. There is a violent opposition that is really attempting to overthrow the revolution, and they will use whatever means. I think that the government has to take this into account with any decisions that they make about how far to take the

nationalizations or the takeover of factories.

It is interesting to see the response that Nicolas Maduro has had reflected in major media in North America. The positive steps that the government has taken in the past few years, the government attempts to diversify the economy, to increase the amount of food production in Venezuela, to distribute food in a way that goes around these private companies, have all been met with complete hostility in the U.S. media.

When the government of Venezuela involves the military in helping to distribute food it is suddenly a militarization of food distribution and “no one is going to get to the food.” When we learn about the community gardens and incentives for people to plant more food it is referred in major media as “forced labour in Venezuela.”

They are still twisting what the government is doing in response to this economic crisis at every turn. They did the same thing under President Hugo Chavez and they continue that under President Nicolas Maduro. It is a very concerted campaign to make sure that people in the North America really don't know what is actually happening in Venezuela. They don't know about the community initiatives, the gardens and cooperatives, they don't understand how food distribution works in Venezuela. People are meant to be confused enough so that the U.S. can make their threats against the government, can increase their military presence in the region and can even directly say, as one diplomat did a few days ago that “maybe this food crisis is going to necessitate foreign aid and intervention.” This is something that should be unheard of for the United States to be able to say when it comes to Venezuela and Latin America.

Cindy: We are running out of time, but there is one thing that I wanted you to address before we do run out of time. In your recent article in Fire This Time, called “Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Venezuela: the Economic War and Mass Media Lies and Deceptions” [see Fire This Time, Volume 10, Issue 8], you point out that , when it was obvious that the opposition was going to take the Parliament in the last elections in Venezuela in 2015, Hillary Clinton said “We're winning, we're winning,” or something similar. Who is



Pro-government rally in Miranda State, Sept. 1, 2016

“we”? I mean, this is what you are talking about. The United States and Hillary Clinton have no business about what is happening in Venezuela, so who is this “we” that she is talking about?

Alison: This “we” is the very friendly hand-in-hand relationship that the government of the United States has with the opposition in Venezuela. Imperialism in Latin America, the U.S. government and their allies, consider the opposition in Venezuela to be their good friends. You can see that through the words of Hillary Clinton as well as through their history.

Henrique Capriles is a name that people hear in U.S. media, when it comes to Venezuela, as a member of the opposition. He is part of a political party called “Justice First,” or “Primera Justicia” that began as a U.S.-funded project in Venezuela, funded through US-Aid in the 90's. This party and similar organizations have continued to receive U.S. political and financial support. This U.S. support is the most important thing for us to discuss.

Whether it is through the U.S. Presidential election, when we have Hillary Clinton making these statements against Venezuela, or after, we know that it is the U.S. government's interests to overthrow the Bolivarian Revolution and the government of Venezuela. Definitely we have to build and work on building more education about this. About the violent opposition, the campaign of U.S. sanctions, the campaign of U.S. military actions off the coast of Venezuela, as well as about Obama's Executive Order. This Executive Order was first released in March, 2015 that declared that Venezuela was somehow a “threat to U.S. national security.” A country that is building social justice, and has never attacked the United States is suddenly on this list.

That Executive Order was renewed one year later, in March of 2016. It continues to enable further U.S. sanctions against Venezuela and also to build that political support that they U.S. government needs to continue their attacks.

This is the context in which I believe it is our responsibility to build a solidarity movement with Venezuela. As Fire This Time in Vancouver we are working to bring Venezuela to the streets of Vancouver, to have days of information, and petitioning the U.S. government to repeal the Executive Order and to end the sanctions. I

would encourage your listeners to learn more about the Bolivarian Revolution and to get involved. I have written multiple articles, especially since the December elections in Venezuela, in the Fire This Time newspaper. I encourage people to go to www.firethistime.net to see those articles and also how to get involved in the solidarity movement.

Cindy: It will be linked, the articles will be linked on the Soapbox too when I put this show up. What really gets me about Barack Obama declaring that Venezuela is a threat to the United States is that, as you said Venezuela has never attacked the United States, it has never really attacked anybody. It has not been in any wars, it is not occupying any foreign countries. That's actually the United States. I would like to declare the United States a threat to the world.

Alison: I agree completely, the U.S. is the number one threat to the world and Venezuela is a hope for all of us. We saw that when people marched on the streets on September 1, when supporters of the Bolivarian Revolution marched on the streets in Venezuela and really prevented coup and violence and destabilization in Venezuela. We see them continuing to build.

It is our responsibility not only to talk about that, but to demand U.S. Hands Off Venezuela and exactly, to declare as you said, that the U.S. is in fact a threat to the world.

Cindy: Alison Bodine that you so much for your work and thank you so much for taking your time to be on Cindy Sheehan's Soapbox this week.

Alison: Thank you.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN SUPPORT OF PEOPLE OF YEMEN: A GREAT START FOR BUILDING AN INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST IMPOSED WAR BY SAUDI ARABIA AND THE UNITED STATES

From Yemen to London to Vancouver, peace-loving people demand US/Saudi Arabia Hands Off Yemen!

By Janine Solanki

For nearly the last year and a half, Yemen has been under a Saudi-led war and subject to near daily airstrikes. The Saudi-led bombing has indiscriminately targeting homes and schools, hospitals and mosques, transport centers such as airports, sea ports and bridges, water supply and power infrastructure, factories and agricultural areas, and many other sites. As if destroying Yemen's present and future is not enough, Saudi Arabia is also wiping out Yemen's past, as some of the oldest historical and archaeological sites, precious gems in not only Yemen's history but for all of humanity and civilization, have also been bombed.

This brutal war has resulted in over 10,000 people killed, 30,000 injured and at least 3 million people displaced internally or forced to become refugees in neighboring countries. Along with the bombing campaign, Yemen is also subject to an air, sea and land blockade imposed by the Saudi-led coalition. This has caused a humanitarian crisis of the highest levels, with over 14 million people facing food insecurity, of whom 8 million are severely food insecure, over 19 million people lacking clean water and sanitation and over 14 million without adequate healthcare.

While this is a Saudi-led war, it isn't without the support and backing of the U.S. government, who along with arms deals are providing logistical and intelligence support. Alongside U.S. imperialist support, Canada is moving forward on the world's second largest arms deal with Saudi Arabia, with a \$15 billion deal to supply military so-called "light" armored vehicles.

The International Conference in Support of the Yemeni People took place in London, England from August 20th to 21st 2016 and was sponsored by: Stop the War Coalition, Campaign Against Arms Trade, Human Rights for Yemen, Sheba for Democracy and Human Rights and Arabian Rights Watch Association. The conference brought together hundreds of antiwar and human rights activists, journalists, lawyers, academics, politicians and community leaders from over 20 countries. Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) in Vancouver, Canada was invited to attend and represent Canada's antiwar organizing against the war on Yemen, and sent a delegation of five to the conference. As well, some members of Fire This Time newspaper Editorial Board participated in the conference.

On August 20th the first day of the conference

started out with live streaming video direct from Yemen's capital of Sana'a, where a massive demonstration was taking place against the Saudi-led war. Footage showed huge crowds of over a million Yemeni people joining together, chanting and holding flags and banners in the face of Saudi fighter jets circling overhead and bombing nearby. The conference MC Ahmen Almoaiad from Sheba for Democracy and Human Rights introduced the opening keynote speaker, Lindsay German, who is the convener of the UK-based



Stop the War Coalition. Various Members of Parliament spoke including Scottish MP Tasmina Ahmed-Shiekh of the Scottish National Party, MP and Sinn Féin politician Francie Molloy and Pauline McNeill, a Scottish MP for Glasgow Region. Speakers also included Unite union chief-of-staff Andrew Murray, Dr Riaz Karim, the Mona Relief co-founder, Andrew Smith from Campaign Against Arms Trade, and Sami Ramadan from Iraqi Democrats Against Occupation.

Day two of the conference began with University of Tehran Professor of Communications Saied Reza Ameli on the topic "US/Saudi Exceptionalism". Other speakers included Kim Sharif from Human Rights For Yemen, human rights activist Abdulsalaam Aldhahebi. Participants were eager to hear the prominent former UK MP and Respect Party leader George Galloway, who spoke on the topic "The Role of Saudi Arabia in Promotion of Terrorism". The conference continued with an excerpt from the documentary film "Ibrahim's Fateful Evening" presented by Ahlulbayt TV journalist Mohammad Ali Carter, which showed the human cost of the war through the tragic bombing of one Yemeni family home. The illegality of the war on Ye-

men was discussed by Jan Fermon, an international lawyer and professor, and Dr. Kamal Hilbawy spoke via video link from Kuwait because the UK had denied his visa, and called for an end to US foreign bases. One of the final speakers was Abdulhameed Dashti, a Kuwaiti MP living in Britain.

A final declaration from the conference was presented by the conference organizers, which included demanding that UN member countries respect the sovereign will of the Yemeni people and called for an immediate end to the use of force against the sovereign Yemeni people. As the conference closed, a direct satellite link was opened to news channels in Yemen and several Arabic news channels throughout the Middle East, broadcasting the conference and its participants to Yemen where people could see the international support joining together in defense of Yemen.

The International Conference to Support Yemeni People was a great opportunity to establish more international connections for organizations and individuals organizing around the world against the war on Yemen. From the work that MAWO is doing to protest and petition against Canada's \$15 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia, we were able to find out about similar organizing going on in European countries whose governments also are selling arms to Saudi Arabia.

Going forward the conference has set the tone for more coordination and collaboration internationally, to make antiwar organizing against the war on Yemen more united and effective. From Yemen to London to Vancouver, together we demand:

US and Saudi Arabia Hands Off Yemen!
Stop Bombing Yemen!
Canada: Cancel the Arms Deal with Saudi Arabia!

Follow Janine Solanki on Twitter:
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MAWO's delegation to the International Conference in Support of Yemen

In the summer of 1992 it was found that the Northern Cod stock had fallen to 1% of its earlier level from over fishing and mismanagement. 35,000 jobs were lost almost overnight and many communities were devastated. On the other coast of the county, according to a report from the BC Government Employees Union, between 2001 and 2011 70 mills closed in BC alone and 36,000 jobs were lost.

All of this was because of unsustainable, greedy development by corporations seeking short-term super-profits. They chomped their way through the waters and the forests, and are not focused on the black gold under the soil. We see it again in the way the oil industry chews up workers and then spits them out as soon as the oil runs out or its no longer profitable. The slow down in Alberta's tar sands means that the province's unemployment rates are at a 20 year high, while CBC reported that the suicide rate climbed 30%.

Where are these big corporations now? What's their level of concern for our well being? The truth is we can't trust them with our jobs, our planet or our lives.

System Change Not Climate Change!

We can't understate the significance of the unanimous decision by the people of Lax'walam who rejected the 1.25 billion dollar offer from Petronas to shut up and allow the LNG plant to be built. They are going through the same, and often worse, economic and social challenges we are all and 1.25 billion dollars is a vast sum of money. But their people are not motivated by the short term, and their criteria isn't just financial gain. This allows them to make bold and important stances against the unsustainable resources extraction projects, just like the people gathering at the Standing Rock Camp in North Dakota are doing.

Opposition to these projects is most effective when it is broad and united. It is also most effective when organizers have a clear understanding that under the capitalist system, where competition for profits is more important than cooperation between people – the planet will always be under attack. There is no more scientific debate. If we do not change things drastically now humanity is threatened. The situation is difficult, but we can gain strength and confidence from seeing everywhere around us people standing up for their rights and for the planet. We can join them and build the better and sustainable world we all need and deserve!

Viva Venezuela! Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign Gains Momentum! Activists from Ottawa to Vancouver, Resolve to Continue Actions in Defense of Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution

By Alison Bodine & Janine Solanki

The mainstream media and U.S. politicians are all touting the same line on Venezuela – that the country has fallen into an economic crisis, which has brought it to a humanitarian crisis. The only protests on the streets which are reported on are those by right-wing, anti-government forces aiming to overthrow the legitimate Venezuelan President Maduro.

What the mainstream media is not reporting is

that this is not just an economic crisis, but an economic war orchestrated by the US government and their imperialist allies, working hand-in-hand with the violent counterrevolutionary opposition. That the shortage of goods can find its source at the hands of Venezuela's right-wing opposition, who owns most of the food and commodity production. U.S. politicians and mainstream media are not applauding the efforts of the Venezuelan government to combat price gouging and the hoarding and smuggling of goods. Mainstream media is definitely not showing video footage or photos of the massive demonstrations in support of Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution, or publishing the dangerous threats of violence called for by the Venezuelan counterrevolutionary opposition.

It is in the interests of U.S. imperialism to see Venezuela return to the impoverished country it was before Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution came to power and started working in the interests of poor and working people in Venezuela. Here in Canada, peace-loving people are working in defense of the Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution, armed with the truth in the face of imperialist lies.

On August 7, 2016 the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign was invited to participate in the second conference "Day of Solidarity with Venezuela," a gathering organized by the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Ottawa. This conference included presentations and workshops about the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela as well as an opportunity for solidarity groups and activists to discuss how to build a stronger Venezuela solidarity movement across Canada.

Among other presentations, there was a pow-

erful speech by the Venezuelan Ambassador to Canada Wilmer Barrientos, as well as a lively and informative discussion on the role of social media and how to use social media in a Venezuela solidarity campaign. Participants in the solidarity conference also received materials to use in their continuing work for Venezuela; this included a copy of Fire This Time newspaper, which was given to every participant by the Venezuelan Embassy.



Back in Vancouver, Canada the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign organized a day of action for Venezuela on August 19. This action once again brought people from a wide-range of backgrounds to the streets of Vancouver in solidarity with

Venezuela. First, at a protest at the U.S. Consulate, then at an information table and petitioning for U.S. Hands Off Venezuela at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

The picket at the U.S. Consulate was MC'd by Max Tennant, a central organizer with the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign, who led rounds of lively chants and picketing. He introduced also welcome speakers at the demonstration including Brian Sproule from the CPC-ML and David Whittelsey, a long-time antiwar activist. There were also greetings from Alison Bodine, the Coordinator of the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign, who was participating in an antiwar conference in London, England. The picket closed with poetry by social justice and Cuba solidarity activist Shakeel Lochan.

As the U.S. began intensifying its attacks on Venezuela following the December elections, the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign has organized an action in the streets of Vancouver every month. From Ottawa to Vancouver, we are committed to working with other groups across Canada and around the world build a stronger and more united movement in solidarity with Venezuela and the Bolivarian Revolution to demand:

U.S. Hands Off Venezuela!
Self-Determination for Venezuela NOW!

purchase of essential items?

Ambassador Barrientos: I come from the area with an open border with Colombia. Historically, all borders are areas of much legal and illegal economic exchange. Yes, it is true that many Venezuelans have gone; many Colombians have gone to Venezuela as well. But why do you think Venezuela closed its border with Colombia and then reopened it after a year?

On August 11, 2015 the national Government announced the closure of a 2,200 km section of the border with Colombia in Tachira state for an indefinite period. The measure was adopted by the Venezuelan State in response to the injury of three Bolivarian Armed Forces by paramilitary groups. This closure also sought to halt the smuggling of fuel, food, and medicines, among other items, that attacks the economic stability of the Venezuelan region.

Today, according to the figures of the Bolivarian government of Venezuela at least 5 million Colombians have migrated to our country. The majority of which are people fleeing difficult situations of internal conflict or humanitarian crisis, for which Venezuela have always given them solidarity and protection.

A BBC report has found that in the brother country of Colombia, the smuggling of Venezuelan gasoline is more lucrative than drug trafficking. Because gasoline is so cheap in Venezuela, its smuggling to Colombia has become a business with a yield of 10,000%, according to a report from the Directorate of Taxes and Customs of Colombia.

Other military authorities in Colombia, where gasoline is one of the most expensive in Latin America at \$1.1 USD a liter, have said that because of this profitability, smuggling has been linked branches of the

guerrillas and the Colombian paramilitaries. In fact, according to the Center for Security and Drug Studies at the University of the Andes in Bogota, an increase in the effectiveness of drug seizures has caused some drug cartels to become gasoline cartels.

According to PDVSA numbers, 100,000 barrels of oil (5% of its total daily production) move from Venezuela to Colombia daily. Also according to the PDVSA, smuggling generates losses for Venezuela of as much as \$1.400 billion USD per year.

We have briefly discussed the example of gasoline, but certainly this is only one item. This same situation happens with food and medicine, energy, vehicles and other necessities. Some examples of this are: a box of Glucophage, vital medicine for diabetics, costs less than ten Bolívares in Venezuela and about fifty or sixty Bolívares in Colombia; precooked corn flour, costs 7.5 Bolívares in Venezuela and more than 55 Bolívares in Colombia.

In this sense the smuggling of food, medicine, and fuel from Venezuela to Colombia brings shortages and promotes and black markets or parallel markets for staple products. These cited examples are consistent with the position and reality of our brother country. Chancellor of the Republic, Delcy Rodríguez, asked the government of Colombia to exercise control over the exchange rate of the Bolívar. Her Colombian counterpart has relied negatively to this, arguing that the price difference in products and fuels subsidized in Venezuela with respect Colombia, "make it very difficult to control the smuggling."

FTT: The President, Nicolás Maduro and the Venezuelan government described the situation in Venezuela today as an economic war. What are some of the measures that the Venezuelan government has taken in order to combat this economic war? What do you think is the level of organization of the masses against the sabotage of the counterrevolution?

Ambassador Barrientos: As previously mentioned, we have taken actions, one of which is the implementation of the "16 production engines." I have referenced our website for specific information. On our website (www.misionvenezuela.org) there is interactive and comprehensive material on these 16 engines.

However, in general terms, these motors have been

activated in 36 sectors and for 50 priority items in the country.

For example, Plan 50 has been designed to help bring the economic emergency in the country to a position of stability and growth. This plan was designed around 50 specific goods, items for which there is now a concentrated effort to produce and sustain them with our own people, without relying on a dollar or anyone, in order to guarantee books and uniforms for our children and food and services for our people.

Other components of the economic engines work in prioritized sectors: 1. Food Industry, 2. Pharmaceutical, 3. Industrial, 4. New exports to generate foreign exchange, 5. Communal, social and socialist economy, 6. Hydrocarbons, 7. Petrochemical, 8. Mining, 9. Domestic and international tourism, 10. Construction, 11. Forestry, 12. Industrial Military, 13. Telecommunications and information technology, and 14. public and private banks.

FTT: And in respect to how well organized people can make a difference?

Amb. Barrientos: I'm sure it is a blunt fact, but I will give you an example. The Executive Branch has created and promoted the missions, which was the name given by the humanist President, Hugo Chávez, to a set of social programs. These missions have the aim of improving the living conditions of the people, and of ensuring multiple human rights to the population; human rights such as housing, food, health, education, culture, sport and security, among others.

The recent creation of the Local Committees of Supply and Production (CLAP) has constituted a new form of popular organization responsible, together with the Ministry of Food, for distributing products to every house to cover the basic necessities. This new creation has served 504,000 families across the country, and strengthened the joint work of popular power and the Government towards ensuring the feeding of the people. A total of 8.4 trillion Bolívares have been approved President Maduro to be given to governors across the country to boost the Popular Food Distribution System. All of the workers in this network do so voluntarily, consciously and responsibly.

Thanks to this effort more than 500,000 families have been assisted in 208 municipalities, 464 parishes and 2,034 communities, where volunteers have also surveyed the needs of the people and then worked hand-in-hand with the mayors and governors.

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Residents participate in food distribution with CLAP in Caracas Venezuela

Viene de la página 7

en educación, obras públicas, viviendas, salarios, empleos y pensiones, aún en medio de la caída de ingresos por renta petrolera.

FTT: ¿Finalmente, tu mencionas que miles de venezolanos van a Colombia para la compra de artículos de primera necesidad?

Sr. Barrientos: Yo vengo de esa zona donde fue abierta la frontera. Históricamente como todas las fronteras son zonas de mucho intercambio económico legal e ilegal. Si es cierto muchos venezolanos han ido, también muchos colombianos han ido a Venezuela. ¿Pero porque crees que Venezuela cerró sus fronteras con Colombia y fueron abiertas después de un año?

El 11 de agosto del 2015 el Gobierno Nacional anuncia el cierre de la frontera con 2,200 km de extensión por un periodo indefinido en el Estado Táchira. La medida que fue adoptada por el Estado Venezolano en respuesta a que 3 funcionarios de nuestras fuerzas armadas bolivarianas resultaron heridos por grupos paramilitares, también busca detener el contrabando de combustible, alimentos, medicinas entre otros que atacan la estabilidad económica de la región venezolana.

En la actualidad cifras del gobierno bolivariano de Venezuela al menos 5 millones de colombianos han migrado a nuestro país en su mayoría huyendo de situaciones difíciles, de conflictividad interna o crisis humanitaria, para el cual Venezuela les han brindado siempre solidaridad y protección.

Un reportaje de la BBC, encontró que en el Hermano país de Colombia era más lucrativo el contrabando de la gasolina venezolana que el narcotráfico. Al ser la gasolina tan barata en Venezuela, su contrabando a Colombia se ha convertido en un negocio con una rentabilidad del 10.000%, según un reporte de la Dirección de Impuestos y Aduanas de Colombia.

Otras autoridades militares de Colombia -donde la gasolina es una de las más costosas de América Latina a US\$1,1 el litro- han dicho que por esa rentabilidad al negocio del contrabando se han vinculado ramas de las guerrillas y los paramilitares colombianos.

De hecho, de acuerdo al Centro de Estudios sobre Seguridad y Drogas de la Universidad de los Andes de Bogotá, el aumento de la efectividad en la incautación de drogas ha hecho que algunos carteles de la droga pasen a ser carteles de la gasolina.

Según números de Pdvsa, 100.000 barriles de petróleo (un 5% de su producción total al día) pasan de Venezuela a Colombia a diario. El contrabando genera pérdidas para Venezuela por US\$1.400 millones por año, según cifras

de la estatal venezolana PDVSA.

Pusimos brevemente el ejemplo de la gasolina, pero sin duda esto es solo un solo rubro, esta misma situación pasa con alimentos y medicamentos, energía, vehículos y demás productos de primera necesidad. Algunos ejemplos de esto son una caja de glucophage, medicina de vital importancia para los diabéticos, en Venezuela cuesta menos de diez Bolívars y allá en Colombia cuesta unos cincuenta o sesenta Bolívars. La harina de maíz precocido, cuesta allá cincuenta y cinco Bolívars, en Venezuela siete con cincuenta.

En este sentido el contrabando de alimentos, medicinas, combustibles desde Venezuela a Colombia trae consigo desabastecimiento y promueve mercados paralelos o mercados negros para productos que de primera necesidad. Y estos ejemplos ahora citados concuerdan con la posición y realidad que maneja el país hermano. La canciller de la República, Delcy Rodríguez, pidió al gobierno de Colombia ejercer control sobre el tipo de cambio del bolívar, a lo que su homóloga colombiana, respondió con una negativa, argumentando que la diferencia de precios en productos y combustibles subsidiados en Venezuela respecto a los de venta libre en Colombia, "hacen muy difícil controlar el contrabando".

FTT: El presidente, Nicolás Maduro, y el gobierno venezolano describen la situación en Venezuela hoy en día como una guerra económica. ¿Cuáles son algunas de las medidas que el gobierno venezolano ha tomado con el fin de combatir esta guerra económica? ¿Qué crees es el nivel de organización de las masas contra el sabotaje de la contrarrevolución?

Sr. Barrientos: Como mencione anteriormente mencione, hemos tomado acciones, una de ellas es la instrumentación de los 16 motores productivos. He referenciado nuestra página web para ser lo más concreto en este medio. Pero tenemos en nuestra página web (misionvenezuela.org) un material interactivo y amplio sobre estos 16 motores, sin embargo, en términos generales los Motores han permitido activar 36 sectores y 50 rubros prioritarios para el país.

Así se diseñó el Plan 50, que consiste en llevar la emergencia económica a la estabilidad y el crecimiento, son los 50 bienes, rubros en los que se han concentrado los esfuerzos para producirlos y sostenerlos con nuestro propio pueblo, sin depender de un dólar ni de nadie, para garantizarles a nuestros niños, sus libros, sus uniformes, la comida de nuestro pueblo y todos los servicios.

Por otra parte los motores comprenden áreas



tan prioritarias como: 1. Agroalimentario, 2. Farmacéutico, 3. Industrial, 4. Nuevas exportaciones para generación de divisas, 5. Economía Comunal, social y socialista, 6. Hidrocarburos, 7. Petroquímica, 8. Minería, 9. Turismo nacional e internacional, 10.-Construcción, 11. Forestal, 12. Militar industrial, 13. Telecomunicaciones e informática y 14. Banca pública y privada.

FTT: ¿Respecto así el pueblo organizado puede hacer la diferencia?

Sr. Barrientos: Estoy seguro es un contundente hecho te daré un ejemplo. El Poder Ejecutivo ha creado e impulsado las misiones, que fue el nombre dado por el Presidente humanista, Hugo Chávez, a un conjunto de programas sociales, con el propósito de mejorar las condiciones de vida del pueblo, dirigidas a garantizar múltiples derechos humanos de la población, como vivienda, alimentación, salud, educación, cultura, deporte y seguridad, entre otros.

Recientemente la creación de los Comités Locales de Abastecimiento y Producción (CLAP) que constituyen la nueva forma de organización popular encargada, junto al Ministerio de Alimentación, de la distribución casa por casa de los productos regulados de primera necesidad. La nueva implementación que ha servido a 504 mil familias de todo el país, consolida el trabajo mancomunado del poder popular y el Gobierno Nacional en pro de garantizar la alimentación del pueblo. Un total de ocho mil 400 millones de bolívars aprobó el presidente Maduro a gobernadores de todo el país, para impulsar el Sistema Popular de Distribución de Alimentos. Todos los trabajadores y trabajadoras de esta red, lo hacen de forma voluntaria, consiente y responsable.

Gracias a este esfuerzo más de 500 mil familias han sido atendidas en 208 municipios, 464 parroquias y dos mil 34 comunidades, donde además se recogen las necesidades del pueblo para luego tratarlas de la mano con los alcaldes y gobernadores.

Sigue Alison en Twitter: @Alisoncolette

"By Any Means Necessary..."



MALCOLM X SPEAKS

Excerpt from "The Ballet or the Bullet" speech. April 3, 1964

"1964 threatens to be the most explosive year America has ever witnessed. The most explosive year. Why? It's also a political year. It's the year when all of the white politicians will be back in the so-called Negro community jiving you and me for some votes. The year when all of the white political crooks will be right back in your and my community with their false promises, building up our hopes for a letdown, with their trickery and their treachery, with their false promises which they don't intend to keep. As they nourish these dissatisfactions, it can only lead to one thing, an explosion; and now we have the type of black man on the scene in America today -- I'm sorry, Brother Lomax -- who just doesn't intend to turn the other cheek any longer.

Don't let anybody tell you anything about the odds are against you. If they draft you, they send you to Korea and make you face 800 million Chinese. If you can be brave over there, you can be brave right here. These odds aren't as great as those odds. And if you fight here, you will at least know what you're fighting for."

Continued from page 11

made in the Boushie case, and others, betray a sense that the writers can no longer count on the structures of the state to support them economically, politically and socially; as their privilege diminishes, they respond with racist and sexist hatred, while proclaiming their own victimization." This white victimization, as discussed by McDougall, is very dangerous. It attempts to re-write the history of Canada and paint white Canadians as the victims of our current social, political and economic set up. This can be quickly disproved with statistics, facts and even anecdotal evidence.

Aboriginal Youth in Canada

The truth is that young Indigenous people in Canada, like Colten Boushie, are facing an enormous uphill battle against systemic racism and inequality. Boushie was a leader in his community, a loving son, brother, uncle, nephew and grandson, who was training to become a firefighter. He may or may not have been an exceptional member of his community, either way he was loved and cherished and did nothing to deserve being murdered at the hands of a vigilantly racist.

According to Statistics Canada, First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples now make up at least 4.3% of Canada's population of 36 million. This marks a shift in demographics as First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples made up about 2.8% of Canada's population in 1996. Indigenous people in Canada, whether First Nations, Métis and/or Inuit are also some of the youngest peoples in Canada, almost half of their populations are under the age of 26. This means that Indigenous youth make up 7% of Canada's youth demographic.

While Aboriginal youth make up 7% of the youth living today in Canada, they make up 41% of youth who are entering Canada's justice system, according to a recent data published by Canada's Justice Department.

According to CTV News, "A 2000 report from the Canadian Institute of Health, suicides among First Nations youth (aged 15 to 24) was about five to six times higher than non-aboriginal youth in Canada."

These shocking statistics are not because Indigenous youth in Canada are somehow less capable or inherently more depressed or prone to crime and violence. These numbers come from hundreds of years of colonial history in Canada that has



attempted to destroy Indigenous people, their culture and their right to determine their own future.

Young people like Colten Boushie are being cut down every day in Canada, but usually in much less obvious ways than the horrible violence that Colten and his friends faced on the farm of Gerald Stanley on August 9, 2016. It is time to change course in Canada, to empower Indigenous youth rather than suppress them, as has been the government of Canada's official policy since its creation.

Voices for Change Demand Justice for Colten Boushie

Since Boushie's murder his community has been mobilizing demanding "Justice for Colten". His family members have spoken out about what a great friend and family member he was and how he will be remembered for many years to come.

Vice Chief of the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations, Kimberly Jonathan, outlined for the CBC why it is so important that Colten Boushie's name doesn't disappear from national headlines, "There is a lot at stake here. Not only for the family who will always miss Colten. But also for all of Saskatchewan and Canada."

We need to keep up the pressure on the government, court system and RCMP, all institutions which have a despicable and unjust history towards Aboriginal people in Canada. People across Canada need to continue taking a public stand and demand "Justice for Colten." It is only by raising our voices in solidarity and joining the calls for justice and action by Indigenous people across Canada that we will build towards the better future Indigenous youth need and deserve.

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fear in society. This reactionary campaign ensures that people in the U.S., Canada and Europe see themselves and their interests as divided from that of refugees and gives capitalist governments a scapegoat for deepening economic crisis.

An important component of this campaign is the way that Western governments have been able to use their own inaction towards the refugee crisis to further their attack on poor, working and oppressed people. By perpetuating the refugee crisis, and refusing to give refugees legal and safe ways to get to Europe and to move within it, governments are giving far-right political parties exactly what they need when they claim that Europe is facing an "invasion." And this kind of fear campaigning is not limited to the far-right, Prime Minister of the U.K. also referred to refugees coming to Europe as "swarms," likening them to insects instead of human beings desperate for a safe place to be.

One example of the devastating results of this campaign in Europe, which is propelled forward by major capitalist media and politicians alike, is included in report presented to the European Union in May, 2015 called the "Europe Islamophobia Report." This study documented cases of violence and harassment against Muslims across Europe, including violent attacks and the vandalizing of Mosques and community centres as well as physical and verbal assault on Muslims. The report not only found that Islamophobia was on the rise across Europe, with attacks increasing as much as 500% in France in 2015, it also concluded that the refugee crisis was fueling resentment towards Muslims across Europe.

Another way that governments insure that poor and working people see themselves as separate from refugees is through their campaign to ensure that refugees are equated with terrorists. This can be seen clearly in the Presidential campaign of Donald Trump, who, following the shooting in San Bernardino, California, announced "Donald J. Trump is calling for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what is going on..."

Similar statements have been used by far-right and populist politicians in Europe, who are also intent on whipping up more fear and division in society to gain popular support. According to a Pew Research Centre survey, this campaign in working,



in Europe, despite the fact that not a single refugee has been linked to any terrorist attack, their survey found that "In eight of the 10 European nations surveyed, half or more [people surveyed] believe incoming refugees increase the likelihood of terrorism in their country."

Through their response to the refugee crisis, the capitalist class has also imposed divisions between refugees themselves. By introducing policies and resettlement opportunities that are only open to Syrian refugees, or favour Syrian refugees, they have created an atmosphere of competition between refugees. When they are able to divide refugees between one another it makes it more difficult for refugees to stand together for their human and legal rights.

Canada's Role in the Refugee Crisis

As poor and working people in Canada, it is important that we recognize the leading role that Canada has played in the death and destruction in the Middle East and Africa that has led to the refugee crisis. Because of this, Canada has the responsibility to open its borders to refugees.

As of the end of August, 2016, Canada has accepted 30,275 refugees. Some people might argue that by taking in more than 25,000 refugees Canada has fulfilled this responsibility, but this is far from the truth. Not only does the government of Canada need to do more to guarantee refugees their basic human and legal rights, Canada also has the responsibility to accept more refugees from Syria and other parts of the Middle East and Africa. Canada could accept 200,000 more refugees this year, and grant them full human, legal and citizen rights.

Even the family of Alan Kurdi, whose photograph caused so many politicians around the world to declare their commitment to "help" refugees, has not been able to find permanent housing in Canada since they arrived.

Refugees Welcome! Fighting Back Against Bigotry & Racism

As imperialist wars, occupations and interventions in the Middle East and Africa expand, the refugee crisis is only going to continue to grow. In turn, governments in Europe, the U.S. and Canada are also going to increase their propagation of hate, bigotry and Islamophobia in their attempt to bring the crisis under their control.

In response to this racist campaign, poor and working people in imperialist countries must demand that all borders be opened immediately. This is the only way to immediately alleviate the pain and suffering of refugees. Refugees must also be welcomed into Europe, the U.S. and Canada by granting them full human and legal rights that enable them to live dignified lives.

As poor and working people we must also stand with refugees from all over the Middle East and Africa, people who, like anyone, do not want to be forced to leave their homes, families and everything they have ever known. We have a responsibility to put an end to the refugee crisis and educate, organize and mobilize to end imperialist wars, occupations and interventions!

No to Wars and Occupations! Yes to Refugees! Open the Borders Now!

Follow Alison on Twitter: @Alisoncolette

resources are stretched by taking in millions of refugees. The war in Syria has drawn in a number of regional and international players, including the US,



Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and other NATO countries including Canada. The world is now facing a new era of war and occupation which is expanding every day. Furthermore, the war abroad has been matched by a war at home in imperialist countries. Under the guise of 'preventing terrorism' legislation restricting the right to freedom of speech and the right to organize has been passed in many countries, targeting everyone from peace activists to environmental activists to union organizers. The struggle to defend our own human and democratic rights is necessarily tied to the struggle against war.

END CANADA'S INTERVENTION IN SYRIA AND BEYOND!

For a long time, Canadians have avoided confronting the Canadian government's role in wars abroad, believing that the warmongers were our neighbours to the south. However, since the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Centre it has become increasingly clear to people in Canada that this government - whether Liberal or Conservative - is playing an important role in this new era of war and occupation. Under a Liberal government, Canada played a leading role in the war in Afghanistan, and supported the US behind the scenes in Iraq. The

war in Afghanistan was extended by the Conservative government, and the Canadian Air Force conducted air strikes in Libya as well as Syria. The government of Canada also funded Syrian 'rebel' groups to the tune of \$5.3 million, according to information obtained by the National Post. Although Canada's participation in air strikes in Syria have ended under the new Liberal government, a number of other war planes remain, supporting the US-led mission.

The government of Canada has spent billions of taxpayer dollars on funding this war drive around the world, while social programs that Canadians rely on - such as employment insurance, public health care, and education - have faced funding cuts with the excuse that there is 'no money' to support these programs. Wouldn't we people in Canada prefer that our hard-earned tax dollars fund these necessities rather than these ongoing wars which have utterly failed to make the world a safer place?

Canada should also open its doors to refugees of these wars and significantly expand and speed up the existing program to accept Syrian refugees. The government of Canada has played a significant part in creating the wars which led to the refugee crisis to begin with. If as they claim they are truly concerned with the human rights Syrians, Afghans, Libyans, and others whose countries they have invaded or attacked, then they should open the doors for 200,000 refugees to come to this country. This is the least Canada can do for people who have suffered so much.

WHICH WAY FORWARD FOR SYRIA?

Until 2011, Syria was a peaceful

country, and one of the few remaining secular democracies in the Middle East. The influence of terrorists and radical Islamists in the country was small. Like any country, it was not without internal problems and divisions, but these problems pale in comparison to the threat Syrians now face from Daesh, US-backed terrorists and ongoing US airstrikes. The US and their allies created the terrorist threat in Syria - they certainly won't solve it. The only way forward for Syria is for the US, Turkey, Canada, and all other foreign countries to withdraw all troops, stop the airstrikes, and end all interference in Syria's internal affairs. If the Daesh and the other terrorists are to be stopped, it must be by the Syrian government and allies they choose in this fight.

Now more than ever, Syrians need peace-loving people around the world to unite to demand an end to foreign intervention in their country.

No War on Syria!
US and Turkey Out of Syria Now!

Follow Nita Palmer on Twitter: @NGP1z0

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The Newspaper Of
FIRE THIS TIME
MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE
www.firethistime.net
Volume 10 Issue 9
September 2016
Published Monthly

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Fire This Time Newspaper is written, produced and distributed entirely by volunteer labour and printed in Vancouver, Canada

-ISSN-1712-1817-

Forgotten War No More! Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) Protest Saudi-led War on Yemen in Vancouver

By Janine Solanki

Today in Yemen, bombs are dropping on towns and cities, killing innocent people and destroying infrastructure. However this is not just today – nearly every day for the past 17 months, a US-backed Saudi-led war has been bombarding Yemen with airstrikes. Saudi Arabia has also imposed an air, sea and land blockade, with the help of their imperialist allies including the US, which prevents Yemenis from accessing food, fuel, medicines and humanitarian aid.

Despite that the mainstream media has ignored the war against Yemen, to the point that it has been dubbed "The Forgotten War", the people of Yemen are making their voices heard loud and clear. On August 20, 2016, hundreds of thousands of people rallied in Yemen's capital of Sana'a to protest the US-backed Saudi bombing campaign on their country. Videos and photos of the massive demonstration are awe-inspiring, especially in the face of Saudi fighter jets circling above that launched airstrikes in nearby areas.

While the people of Yemen are heroically resisting the Saudi-led war against them, in Vancouver, Canada antiwar activists and peace-loving people came together to show support for Yemen on August 26, 2016. Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) held their monthly antiwar rally and petition campaign in downtown Vancouver, in front of the Vancouver Art Gallery. With picket signs, banners and chants of "Saudi Arabia Hands Off Yemen!" anyone walking by on the busy street could see that here Yemen is not a forgotten war. An information table was busy with people stopping to ask for more information, and activists talked to many people walking by who signed MAWO's petition demanding that Canada stop its \$15 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia.

MAWO chairperson Alison Bodine spoke on the continued US bombing campaign in Syria and their support and funding of the vicious so-called "moderate" Syrian anti-government rebels. Azza



Rojbi, MAWO Executive Committee member, reported back from MAWO's delegation to the recent International Conference to Support Yemeni People in London, England. Azza then introduced a voice message from Kim Sharif, a main organizer of the London conference, prominent lawyer and the director of Human Rights for Yemen, who gave solidarity greetings to the rally and thanked MAWO for joining in the London conference to support the people of Yemen. Veteran civil rights and antiwar activist David Whittlesey spoke from his experience from the Vietnam war to today, and encouraged people to get involved. MAWO Executive Committee member Janine Solanki spoke on NATO's increasingly dangerous role as a military tool of imperialism, from Yugoslavia to more recently Afghanistan, Libya, Iraq and now it's build up of military forces in Eastern Europe on the border with Russia. Janine also spoke on Canada's increasing role within NATO, especially as Canada will be leading a battalion in Latvia and contributing fighter jets, weaponry and at least 450 soldiers to this war drive.

Mobilization Against War and Occupation continues to organize its monthly antiwar rally and petition campaigns, and encourages all peace-loving people to come out and get involved in organizing against this new era of war and occupation. Check out www.mawovancouver.org or on twitter @mawovan for upcoming events, recent newsletters, and more information.

Saudi Hands Off Yemen! Stop Bombing Yemen!
Canada Out of NATO Now!
US/UK/Canada/France/NATO: No to War on Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan!

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Saudi Bombing in Yemen

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